In all Shades

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IN ALL SHADES

I.

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IN ALL SHADES

A Novel

BY

GRANT ALLEN

AUTHOR OF 'BABYLON' 'STRANGE STORIES' ETC.

IN THREE VOLUMES

VOL. I.

London

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IN ALL SHADES.

CHAPTER I.

About one o'clock in the morning, by a flickering fire of half-dead embers, young men of twenty-five are very apt to grow confidential. Now, it was one o'clock gone, by the marble timepiece on Edward Hawthorn's big mantelshelf in King's Bench Walk, Temple; and Edward Hawthorn and Harry Noel were each of them just twenty-five; so it is no matter for wonder at all that the conversation should just then have begun to take a very confidential turn indeed, especially when one remem-

bers that they had both nearly finished their warm glass of whisky toddy, and that it was one of those chilly April evenings when you naturally cower close over the fire to keep your poor blood from curdling bodily altogether within you.

'It's certainly very odd, Noel, that my father should always seem so very anxious to keep me from going back to Trinidad, even for a mere short visit.'

Harry Noel shook out the ashes from his pipe as he answered quietly: 'Fathers are altogether the most unaccountable, incomprehensible, mysterious, unmanageable creatures in God's universe. Women and horses are mere child's-play compared to them. For my own part, I've given up attempting to fathom them altogether.'

Edward smiled half deprecatingly. 'Ah,

but you know, Noel,' he went on in a far more serious tone than his friend's, 'my father isn't at all like that; he's never refused me money or anything else I've wanted; he's been the most liberal and the kindest of men to me; but for some abstruse and inconceivable reason—I can't imagine why—he's always opposed my going back home even to visit him.'

'If Sir Walter'd only act upon the same principle, my dear boy, I can tell you confidentially I'd be simply too delighted. But, confound it all, he always acts upon the exact contrary. He's in favour of my coming down to the Hall, in the very dampest, dreariest, and dullest part of all Lincolnshire, at the precise moment of time when I want myself to be off to Scotland, deer-stalking or grouse-shooting; but he invariably considers all my applications for extra coin as at least inoppor-

tune—as the papers say—if not as absolutely extravagant, or even criminal. A governor who shells out freely while remaining permanently invisible on the other side of the Atlantic, appears to me to combine all the practical advantages of the governor, viewed as an institution, with none of its painful and objectionable drawbacks. *O fortunatus nimium tua si bona noris*, my dear Teddy.'

'Ah, that's all very well for you, Noel; you've got your father and your family here in England with you, and you make light of the privilege because you enjoy it. But it's a very different thing altogether when all your people are separated from you by half a hemisphere, and you've never even so much as seen your own mother since you were a little chap no bigger than that chair there. You'll admit at least that a fellow would

naturally like now and again to see his mother.'

'His mother,' Noel answered, dropping his voice a little with a sort of instinctive reverential inflection. 'Ah, that, now,'s a very different matter. Fathers of course are our natural enemies, we all admit; but the man that goes back upon his own mother isn't worth salt to his porridge.'

'Well, you see, my dear fellow, I've never seen either my father or my mother since I was quite a small boy of eight years old or thereabouts. I was sent home to Joyce's to school then, as you know; and after that, I went to Rugby, and next to Cambridge; and I've almost entirely forgotten by this time even what my father and mother look like. When they sent me home those two photographs there, a few months back, I assure you

there wasn't a feature in either face I could really and truly recognise or remember.'

'Precious handsome old gentleman your father, anyhow,' Noel observed, looking up carelessly at the large framed photograph above the fire-place. 'Seems the right sort too; has what I should call a benevolent shelling-out cast of countenance, which ought to be strictly encouraged in the breed of fathers. Fine air of sterling coininess also, I remark, about his grey hair and his full waistcoat and his turn-down shirt-collar. A man of more than fifty who wears a turn-down collar, I've long observed, is invariably coiny. Real old solid mahogany father, I should be inclined to say; good all alike throughout; no veneering. Calculated to cut up very respectably.'

'Oh, Noel, please; don't talk that way!

'My dear fellow, it's the course of nature. We fall as the leaves fall, and new generations replace us and take our money. Good for the legacy duty. Now, is your governor sugar or coffee?'

'Sugar, I believe—in fact, I'm pretty sure of it. He often writes that the canes are progressing, and talks about rattoons and centrifugals and other things I don't know the very names of. But I believe he has a very good estate of his own somewhere or other at the north end of the island.'

'Why, of course, then, that's the explanation of it—as safe as houses, you may depend upon it. The old gentleman's as rich as Crœsus, I'll bet you any money. He makes you a modest allowance over here, which you, who are an unassuming, hard-working, Chitty-on-Contract sort of fellow, consider very

handsome, but which is really not one quarter of what he ought to be allowing you out of his probably princely income. You take my word for it, Teddy, that's the meaning of it. The old gentleman—he has a very knowing look about his weather-eye in the photograph too—he thinks if you were to go out there, and see the estate, and observe the wealth of the Indies, and discover the way he makes the dollars fly, you'd ask him immediately to double your allowance; and being a person of unusual penetration—as I can see, with half a glance, from his picture—he decides to keep you at the other end of the universe, so that you may never discover what a perfect Rothschild he is, and go in for putting the screw on.'

Edward Hawthorn smiled quietly. 'It won't do, my dear fellow,' he said, glancing

up quickly at the handsome open face in the big photograph. 'My father isn't at all that sort of person, I feel certain, from his letters. He's doing all he can to advance me in life; and though he hasn't seen me for so long, I'm the one interest he really lives upon.'

'Oh, you excellent young man, Teddy, how deliciously green and fresh you've managed to keep yourself! Do you really mean to tell me you still believe all that ridiculous paternal humbug? Why, my governor always says precisely the same things to me in precisely the same language. If you were to believe Sir Walter, his one aim and object in life is to make me happy. It's all for my own sake that he stints me in money; it's all for my own sake that he spends every penny he ought to be generously showering upon me, in building new cottages and mend-

ing fences and improving the position of the tenants generally. As if the tenants wanted any improvement! They prefer to pig it, while I prefer to have my money.'

'Well, Noel, I certainly did think it very queer, after I'd taken my degree at Cambridge and got the Arabic scholarship and so forth, that my father didn't want me to go out to the island. I naturally wanted to see my old home and my father and mother, before settling down to my business in life; and I wrote and told them so. But my father wrote back, putting me off with all sorts of made-up excuses: it was the bad season of the year; there was a great deal of yellow fever about; he was very anxious I should get to work at once upon my law-reading; he wanted me to be called to the bar as early as possible.'

'And so, just to please the old gentleman, you left your Arabic, that you were such a dab at, and set to work and mugged up over Benjamin on Sales and Pollock on Mortgages for the best years of your lifetime, when you ought to have been shooting birds in Devonshire or yachting with me in the *Princess of Thule* off the west coast of Scotland. That's not my theory of the way fathers ought to be managed. I consented to become a barrister, just to pacify Sir Walter for the moment; but my ideas of barristering are a great deal more elastic and generous than yours are. I'm quite satisfied with getting my name neatly painted over the door of some other fellow's convenient chambers.'

'Yes, yes, of course you are. But then your case is very different. The heir to an English baronetcy needn't trouble himself

about his future, like us ordinary mortals. But if I didn't work hard and get on and make money, I shouldn't ever be able to marry—at least during my father's lifetime.'

'No more should I, my dear fellow. Absolutely impossible. A man can't marry on seven hundred a year, you see, can he?'

Edward laughed. 'I could,' he answered, 'very easily. No doubt, you couldn't. But then you haven't got anybody in your eye; while I, you know, am anxious as soon as I can to marry Marian.'

'Not got anybody in my eye!' Harry Noel cried, leaning back in his chair and opening his two hands symbolically in front of him with an expansive gesture. 'Oh, haven't I; just dozens of them. Only, of course, it's no use a poor beggar like me, on seven hundred a year, talking about getting married, or else

I'd soon take my pick out of the whole lot of them. Why, by Jove, there was a pretty little girl I saw last Wednesday down at the Buckleburies—a Miss Dupuy, I think, they called her—by the way, a countrywoman of yours, I believe, Edward, from Trinidad; or was it Mauritius? one of those sugary-niggery places or other, anyhow; and I assure you I fairly lost the miserable relics of my heart to her at our first meeting. She's going to be at the boat-race to-morrow; and I'm a Dutchman if I don't think I'll run down there in the dog-cart incontinently, on the spec. of seeing her. Will you come with me?'

'But how about that devilling of Walker's?'

'Oh, nonsense. Walker, Q.C., may devil for himself, for all I care for him. Leave

him alone for once to take care of himself, and come along with me.'

'What o'clock?'

'Eleven. A reasonable hour. You don't catch me getting up at five o'clock in the morning and making the historical Noel nose, which I so proudly inherit, turn blue with cold and shivering at that time of the day, even for the honour of the old 'varsity. Plenty of time to turn in and get a comfortable snooze, and yet have breakfast decently before I drive you down to-morrow morning in my new dog-cart.'

'All right. I'll come with you, then.—Are you going out now? Just post that letter for me, please, will you?'

Noel took it and glanced at the address half unintentionally. 'The Hon. James Hawthorn,' he said, reading it over in a thought-

less mechanical way and in a sort of undertone soliloquy, 'Agualta Estate, Trinidad.—Why, I didn't know, Teddy, this mysterious governor of yours was actually a real live Honourable. What family does he belong to, then?'

'I don't think Honourable means that out in the colonies, you know,' Edward answered, stirring the embers into a final flicker. 'I fancy it's only a cheap courtesy title given to people in the West Indies who happen to be members of the Legislative Council.'

'Legislative Council! Better and better. My dear Ted, the governor's coiny, you may depend upon it, or else he wouldn't be admitted into the legislature of his native country. A man who has so much tin to spare that he can afford to throw some of it away in attending to the affairs of the na-

tion—which means, after all, somebody else's business—is certain to be coiny; absolutely certain. Bleed him, my dear boy; bleed him wholesomely. As a son and a citizen, it's your plain duty to bleed him without flinching. Think for a moment of the force of the example; think how eminently undesirable it is that governors generally should get into the habit of skulking away in remote corners of the uninhabitable tropics, on purpose so as to chouse their own children out of their proper reasonable allowances. It's an atrocious proceeding altogether, I tell you, and, for the sake of the whole community, it ought to be put a stop to immediately without any question.'

Edward paused for a minute, still seated, and poking away nervously at the dying embers; then he said in a more serious voice:

'Do you know, Noel, there's a district judgeship in Trinidad going to be filled up at once by the Colonial Office?'

'Well, my dear boy; what of that? I know a promising young barrister of the Inner Temple who isn't going to be such an absurd fool as to take the place, even if it's offered to him.'

'On the contrary, Harry, I've sent in an application myself for the post this very evening.'

'My dear Hawthorn, like Paul, you are beside yourself. Much learning—of Walker on Specific Performance—has made you mad, I solemnly assure you. The place isn't worth your taking.'

'Nevertheless, if I can get it, Harry, I mean to take it.'

'If you can get it! Fiddlesticks! If you

can get a place as crossing-sweeper! My good friend, this is simple madness. A young man of your age, a boy, a mere child'—they were both the same age to a month, but Harry Noel always assumed the airs of a father towards his friend Hawthorn—'who has already been promoted to devil for Walker, and who knows the most influential solicitor in Chancery Lane personally—why, it's chucking up an absolute certainty; an absolute certainty, and no mistake about it. You're the best Arabic scholar in England; it'd be worth your while stopping here, if it comes to that, for the sake of the Arabic Professorship alone, rather than go and live in Trinidad. If you take my advice, my dear fellow, you'll have nothing more to say to the precious business.'

'Well, Harry, I have two reasons for

wishing to take it. In the first place, I want to marry Marian as early as possible; and I can't marry her until I can make myself a decent income.'

'Bleed him! bleed him!' Harry Noel ejaculated parenthetically, in a gentle whisper.

'And in the second place,' Edward went on, without stopping to notice the muttered interruption, 'I want to go out as soon as I can and see my father and mother in Trinidad. If I get this district judgeship, I shall be able to write and tell them positively I'm coming, and they won't have any excuse of any sort for putting a stopper on it any longer.'

'In other words, in order to go and spy out the hidden wealth of the coiny old governor, you're going to chuck away the finest opening at the English bar, and bind

yourself down to a life of exile in a remote corner of the Caribbean Sea. I believe they call the sea the Caribbean; but anyhow, whether or not, it sounds awfully fine to end a sentence with. Well, my good friend, if you really do it, all that I can say is simply this—you'll prove yourself the most consummate ass in all Christendom.'

'Noel, I've made my mind up; I shall really go there.'

'Then, my dear boy, allow me to tell you, as long as you live you will never cease to regret it. I believe you'll repent it, before you're done, in sackcloth and ashes.'

Edward stirred the dead fire nervously once more for a few seconds and answered nothing.

'Good-night, Hawthorn. You'll be ready to start for the boat-race at ten to-morrow?'

'Good-night, Harry. I'll be ready to start. Good-night, my dear fellow.'

Noel turned and left the room; but Edward Hawthorn stood still, with his bedroom candle poised reflectively in one hand, looking long and steadfastly with fixed eyes at his father's and mother's photographs before him. 'A grand-looking old man, my father, certainly,' he said to himself, scanning the fine broad brow and firm but tender mouth with curious attention—'a grand-looking old man, without a doubt, there's no denying it. But I wonder why on earth he doesn't want me to go out to Trinidad? And a beautiful, gentle, lovable old lady, if ever there was one on this earth, my mother!'

CHAPTER II.

You wouldn't have found two handsomer or finer young men on the day of the boat-race, in all London, than the two who started on the new dog-cart, at ten o'clock, from the door of Harry Noel's comfortable chambers in a quaint old house in Duke Street, St. James's. And yet they were very different in type indeed; as widely different as it is possible for any two young men to be, both of whom were quite unmistakable and undeniable young Englishmen.

Harry Noel was heir of one of the oldest and bluest-blooded families in all Lincoln-

shire; but his face and figure were by no means those of the typical Danes in that most distinctively Danish of English counties. Sir Walter, his father, was tall and fair—a bluff, honest, hard-featured Lincolnshire man; but Harry himself took rather after his mother, the famous Lady Noel, once considered the most beautiful woman of her time in London society. He was somewhat short and well knit; a very dark man, with black hair, moustache, and beard; and his face was handsome with something of a southern and fiery handsomeness, like his mother's, reminding one at times of the purest Italian or Castilian stocks. There was undeniable pride about his upper lip and his eager flashing black eye; while his customary nonchalance and coolness of air never completely hid the hot and passionate southern temperament

that underlay that false exterior of Pall Mall cynicism. A man to avoid picking a quarrel with, certainly, was Harry Noel, of the Inner Temple, and of Noel Hall, near Boston, Lincolnshire, barrister-at-law.

Edward Hawthorn, on the other hand, was tall and slight, though strongly built; a perfect model of the pure Anglo-Saxon type of manhood, with straight fair hair, nearer white almost than yellow, and deep-blue eyes, that were none the less transparently true and earnest because of their intense and unmixed blueness. His face was clear-cut and delicately moulded; and the pale and singularly straw-coloured moustache, which alone was allowed to hide any part of its exquisite outline, did not prevent one from seeing at a glance the almost faultless Greek regularity of his perfectly calm and statuesque

features. Harry Noel's was, in short, the kind of face that women are most likely to fall in love with: Edward Hawthorn's was the kind that an artist would rather rejoice to paint, or that a sculptor would still more eagerly wish to model in the perfect simplicity of pure white marble.

'Much better to go down by the road, you know, Teddy,' Harry Noel said as they took their seats in the new dog-cart. 'All the cads in London are going down by rail, of course. The whole riff-raff of our fellow-man that you're always talking about so sympathetically, with your absurd notions, overflows to-day from its natural reservoirs in the third class into the upper tanks of first and second. Impossible to travel on the line this morning without getting one's-self jammed and elbowed by all the tinkers and tailors,

soldiers and sailors, butchers and bakers and candlestick makers in the whole of London. Enough to cure even you, I should think, of all your nonsensical rights-of-man and ideal equality business.'

'Have you ever travelled third yourself, to see what it was really like, Harry? I have; and, for my part, I think the third-class people generally rather kinder and more unselfish at bottom than the first or second.'

'My dear fellow, on your recommendation I tried it last week; and got such a tremendous facer from a Radical working-man as I never before got, and never expect to get again, in the whole course of my earthly existence. The creature opposite me was a democratic Methodist, I think he called it, or something else equally impossible, and he was haranguing away about the wickedness of

the aristocracy, and the toiling millions, and Lazarus and Dives, and all the rest of it; and at last he went on abusing me and my friends —by implication—so confoundedly, that I really couldn't stand it any longer. "My good sir," said I, leaning over towards him very deferentially—for there were half a dozen of them, all frantic revolutionists and big hustling fellows, in the same carriage— "my good sir," said I, "do you know, all abstract principles must of course be finally judged, in this confessedly imperfect world of ours, by their practical effects when actually tested in the concrete application? Now, there was a time in the history of the world when these liberty, equality, fraternity notions of yours were fairly tried in real earnest. That time was in the French Revolution. Do you mean to tell me you think the result of

the French Revolution was of a sort to encourage further experiments in the same direction?" And what do you suppose the fellow answered me? He looked up in my face with the most profound solemnity, and said he: "Well, and didn't we beat the French at Waterloo?"'

Edward laughed heartily. 'What did you say to that?' he asked, with a twinkle.

'Say? My dear fellow, what on earth *could* I say? When a man gets shut up like a telescope by a regular downright overwhelming *non sequitur* like that, any answer or repartee at all is absolutely impossible. Besides, all the free and independent electors in the carriage with him were perfectly delighted to see how completely he had bowled over the obstructive and anti-democratic scoffer. "He ain't got nothing to say after

that, anyway," they all whispered to one another, grinning and winking. I subsided utterly into the obscurest corner; I collapsed, morally speaking, and was absolutely annihilated. From this day forth, I never mean to travel any more in third-class carriages, or to try arguing under any provocation with the great proletariate. Their logic is too peculiarly perplexed for me to make my way through it. And these are the kind of fellows that you and your friends want to set up to govern us and dance upon us! It won't hold water, my dear boy; it won't hold water. I never can understand a sensible sound-headed man like you being taken in by it for a single minute.'

'Perhaps,' Edward said quietly, 'you might have found some quite as densely illogical fellows in others beside a third-class

carriage.—But where are you going to look for your beautiful young lady from Trinidad or Mauritius? You made her the ostensible pretext, you know, for going to the boat-race.'

'Oh, for that I trust entirely to the chapter of accidents. She said she was going down to see the race from somebody's lawn, facing the river; and I shall force my way along the path, as far as I can get, and simply look out for her. If we see her, I mean to push boldly for an introduction to the somebody unnamed who owns the lawn. Leave the dog-cart at some inn or other down at Putney, stroll along the river casually till you see a beatific vision of sweet nineteen or thereabout, walk in quietly as if the place belonged to you, and there you are.'

They drove on to Putney through the

crowded roads, and put the dog-cart up at the *Coach and Horses*. Then Harry and Edward took to the still more crowded bank, and began to push their way among the densely packed masses of nondescript humanity in the direction of Barnes Bridge.

'Stand out of the way there, can't you,' Harry Noel cried, elbowing aside a sturdy London rough as he spoke with a dexterous application of his gold-tipped umbrella. 'Why do you get in people's way and block the road up, my good fellow?'

'Where are you a-pushin' to?' the rough answered, not without reason, crowding in upon him sturdily in defence of his natural rights of standing-room, and bringing his heavy foot down plump on Harry Noel's neatly fitting walking shoe. 'An' who are you, I should like to know, a-shovin' other

people aside permiscuous like, as if you was acshally the Prince of Wales or the Dook of Edingboro? I'd like to hear you call me a fellow again, I should! Fellow indeed! A fellow's a sheep-stealer!'

'Appears to be some confusion in the man's mind,' Harry Noel said, pushing past him angrily, 'between a fellow and a felon. I haven't got an etymological dictionary handy in my pocket, I regret to say, but I venture to believe, my good friend, that your philology is quite as much at fault in this matter as your English grammar.'

'My dear Noel,' Edward Hawthorn put in, 'please don't add insult to injury. The man's quite within his right in objecting to your pushing him out of a place he took up before you came here. Possession's nine points of the law, you know—ten in the

matter of occupancy, indeed—and surely he's the prior occupant.'

'Oh, if you're going to hold a brief for the defendant, my dear boy, why, of course I throw the case up; I immediately enter a *nolle prosequi*.—Besides, there she is, Teddy. By Jove, there she is. That's her. Over yonder on the lawn there—the very pretty girl by the edge of the wall overhanging the path here.'

'What, the one in blue?'

'The one in blue! Gracious Heavens, no. Is the man mad? The one in blue, he positively says to me! Do you mean to say you call her pretty? No, no; not her. The other one—the very pretty girl; the one in the pink dress, as fresh as a daisy. Did you ever see anybody prettier?'

'Oh, her,' Edward answered, looking

across at the lady in pink carelessly. 'Yes, yes; I see now. Pretty enough, as you say, Harry.'

'Pretty enough! Is that all you've got to say about her! You block of ice! you lump of marble! Why, my dear fellow, she's absolute perfection. That's the worst, now, of a man's being engaged. He loses his eye entirely for female beauty. He believes all possible human charms are exclusively summed up in his own particular Maud or Angelina. For my part, Ted, I go in for a judicious eclecticism. They're all pretty alike, while you're with them: each new one seems the prettiest you've ever seen—till you've got tired of her.'

'What did you say her name was?'

'Miss Dupuy. I'll introduce you in a minute.'

'But, my dear Harry, where are you going? We don't even know the people.'

'Nothing easier, then. We'll proceed to make their acquaintance. See what a lot of cads climbing up and sitting on the wall obstructing the view there! First, seat yourself firmly on the top the same as they do; then, proceed to knock off the other intruders, as if you belonged to the party by invitation; finally, slip over quietly inside, and mix with the lot exactly as if you really knew them. There are such a precious crowd of people inside, that nobody'll ever find out you weren't invited. I've long observed that nobody ever does know who's who at a garden-party, even. The father always thinks his son knows you; and the son always fancies indefinitely you're particular friends of his father and mother.'

As Harry spoke, he had already vaulted up lightly on to the top of the wall, which was steep and high on the side towards the river, but stood only about two feet above the bank on the inner side; and Edward, seeing nothing else to do but follow his example, had taken with shame a convenient seat beside him. In a minute more, Harry was busily engaged in clearing off the other unauthorised squatters, like an invited guest; and two minutes later, he had transferred his legs to the inner side of the wall, and was quietly identifying himself with the party of spectators on the lawn and garden. Edward, who was not a baronet's son, and was blessed with less audacity in social matters than his easy-going friend, could only admire without wholly imitating his ready adaptiveness.

'Miss Dupuy! How delightful! So here you are! This is indeed lucky. I came down on purpose to see you. How very fortunate I should happen to have dropped down upon you so unexpectedly.'

Nora Dupuy smiled a delicious smile of frank and innocent girlish welcome, and held out her pretty little gloved hand to Harry half timidly. 'Why, Mr. Noel,' she said, blushing prettily, 'I hadn't the very slightest idea you knew our good friends the Boddingtons.'

'*Mr.* Boddington?' Harry Noel asked with a marked emphasis on the dubious *Mr.*

'No; Colonel Boddington, of the Bengal Staff Corps. Why, how on earth do you happen not to know their name even? Have you come here, then, with somebody?'

'Exactly,' Harry said, turning to Edward, who was speechless with surprise. 'Allow me to introduce him. My friend, Mr. Hawthorn, a shining light of the Utter Bar.—By the way, didn't you say you came from Trinidad or Mauritius or Ceylon or somewhere? I remember distinctly you left upon me a general impression of tropical fragrance, though I can't say I recollect precisely the particular habitat.'

Nora smiled again, and blushed even more deeply than before. 'It was Trinidad,' she answered, looking down as she spoke.—'Why, Mr. Noel, what about it?'

'Why, my friend Hawthorn here comes from Trinidad too, so you ought to be neighbours; though, as he hasn't been there himself for a great many years, I dare say you won't know one another.'

'Oh, everybody in Trinidad knows everybody else, of course,' Nora answered, half turning to Edward. 'It's such a little pocket colony, you know, that we're all first-cousins to one another through all the island. I'm not acquainted with all the people in Trinidad myself, naturally, because I haven't been there since I was a baby, almost; but my father would be perfectly sure to know him, at any rate, I'm confident.—What did you say your friend's name was, Mr. Noel?'

'Hawthorn,' Edward answered quickly for himself—'Edward Hawthorn.'

'Oh, Mr. Hawthorn,' Nora repeated reflectively. 'Let me see. Hawthorn, Hawthorn. No; I don't think I ever heard the name before—connected with Trinidad, I mean; in fact, I'm sure not. Hawthorn, Hawthorn. Do your people live out there still, Mr.

Hawthorn, or have they settled over in England?'

'My father and mother are still in the island,' Edward answered, a little uncomfortably. 'My father is Mr. James Hawthorn, of Agualta Estate, a place at the north side of Trinidad.'

'Agualta Estate,' Nora replied, turning the name over with herself once more dubiously, 'Agualta Estate. I've certainly heard the name of the place, I'm sure; but never of your people until this minute. How very funny.'

'It's a long time since you've been in the island, you say,' Harry Noel put in suggestively, 'and no doubt you've forgotten Mr. Hawthorn's father's name. He must be pretty well known in Trinidad, I should think, for he's an Honourable, you know,

and a member of the local Legislative Council.'

Nora looked decidedly puzzled. 'A member of the Legislative Council,' she said in some surprise. 'That makes it even funnier and funnier. My papa's a member of Council too, and he knows everybody in the place, you know—that is to say, of course, everybody who's anybody; and poor mamma used always to write me home the chattiest letters, all about everybody and everybody's wife and daughters, and all the society gossip of the colony; and then I see so many Trinidad people when they come home; and altogether, I really thought I knew, by name at least, absolutely everyone in the whole island.'

'And this proves you must be mistaken, Miss Dupuy,' Harry Noel put in carelessly;

for he was half jealous that his own special and peculiar discovery in pretty girls should take so much interest in Edward Hawthorn. 'But anyhow, you'll know all about him before very long, I've no doubt, for Hawthorn's going to take a judgeship in the uttermost parts of the earth, even Trinidad. He'll be going out there, no doubt, from what he tells me, in a month or so from now, the silly fellow.'

'Going out there!' Nora cried. 'Oh, how nice. Why, I shall be going out, too, in the end of June. How delightful, if we should both happen to sail in the same steamer together!'

'Very,' Harry echoed, a little snappishly —'for Hawthorn. I should envy him the voyage immensely. But you don't mean to say, Miss Dupuy, you're really

going to bury yourself alive in the West Indies?'

'Oh, I don't call it burying alive, Mr. Noel; it's perfectly delightful, I believe, from what I remember. Summer all the year round, and dancing, with all the doors and windows open, from September to April.'

'Gracious Heavens, which is Colonel Boddington?' Harry exclaimed eagerly at this particular moment, for he saw an old gentleman of military aspect strolling up casually to speak to Nora. 'Point me out my host, for mercy's sake, or else he'll be bringing a summary action for ejectment against us both as rogues and vagabonds.'

'This is he,' Nora said, as the military gentleman approached nearer. 'Don't you know him? Perhaps I'd better introduce

you. Colonel Boddington—Mr. Noel, Mr. Hawthorn.'

'And I'd better make a clean breast of it at once,' Harry Noel continued, smiling gracefully with his pleasant easy smile—Edward would have sunk bodily into the earth alive, rather than make the ridiculous confession. 'The fact is, we're intruders into your domain, sir—unauthorised intruders. We took our seats on the top of your wall to watch the race; and when we got there, we found a number of roughs were obstructing the view for the ladies of your party; and we assisted the gentlemen of your set in clearing the ground; and then, as I saw my friend Miss Dupuy was here, I made bold to jump over and come to speak to her, feeling sure that a previous acquaintance with her would be a sufficient introduction into your pleasant

society here.—What a delightful place you've got on the river here, really.'

Colonel Boddington bowed stiffly. 'Any friend of Miss Dupuy's is quite welcome here, I'm sure,' he said with some chilly severity.—'Did I understand Miss Dupuy to say your name was Rowell?'

'Noel,' Harry corrected, smiling benignly —'Noel, Noel. You may possibly know my father, as I understand, from Miss Dupuy, you're a Lincolnshire man' (this was a white-lie, but it sufficiently served Harry's purpose) —Sir Walter Noel, of Noel Hall, near Boston, Lincolnshire.'

Colonel Boddington unbent visibly. 'I'm very glad of this opportunity, I'm sure, Mr. Noel,' he said with his most gracious manner. 'As I remarked before, Miss Dupuy's friends will always be welcome with us. Since

you've dropped in so unexpectedly, perhaps you and Mr.—I didn't catch the name—will stop and take a little lunch with us. Our friends mean to join us at lunch after the race is over.'

'Delighted, I'm sure,' Harry answered, quite truthfully. Nothing could have pleased him better than this opportunity. 'Here they come—here they come! Round the corner! Cambridge heads the race, by Jove. Cambridge, Cambridge!' And for five minutes there was a fluttering of handkerchiefs and straining of eyes and confused sound of shouts and laughter, which left no time for Harry or any one else to indulge in rational conversation.

After the boats had passed out of sight, and the company had returned to the paths of sanity once more, Nora Dupuy turned

round to Edward and asked curiously: 'Do you happen to know any people of the name of Ord, Mr. Hawthorn?'

Edward smiled as he answered: 'General Ord's family? Oh, yes, I know them very well indeed—quite intimately, in fact.'

Nora clapped her little hands in a sort of triumph. 'Oh, how nice!' she said gaily. 'Then you *are* the Mr. Hawthorn who is engaged to dear Marian. I felt sure you must be, the moment I heard your name. Oh, I do so hope, then, you'll get this vacant Trinidad appointment.'

'Get it! He'll get it as sure as fate,' Harry said intervening. 'But why on earth are you so anxious he should take it?'

'Why, because, then, Marian would get married, of course, and come out with him to

live in Trinidad. Wouldn't that be just delightful!'

'If they do,' Harry said quietly, 'and if you're going to be there, too, Miss Dupuy, I declare I shall come out myself on purpose to visit them.'

CHAPTER III.

'Oh, Marian, do you know, I've met Mr. Hawthorn; and what a delightful man he is! I quite fell in love with him myself, I assure you! Wasn't it absurd? He came down the other morning to the boat-race; and he and a friend of his positively jumped over the wall, without an invitation, into old Colonel Boddington's front garden.'

Marian took Nora's hand warmly. 'I'm so glad you like Edward,' she said, kissing her cheek and smoothing her forehead. 'I was sure you'd like him. I've been longing for you to come to town ever since we got

engaged, so that you might manage to see him.—Well, dear, and do you think him handsome?'

'Handsome! Oh, Marian, awfully handsome; and so nice, too, dear. And such a sweet voice and manner, so grave and cultivated, somehow. I always do like Oxford and Cambridge men—ever so much better than army men, Marian.'

'Who had he with him at the boat-race?' Marian asked.

'Oh, my dear, such a funny man—a Mr. Noel, whom I met last week down at the Buckleburies. Colonel Boddington says his father's one of the greatest swells in all Lincolnshire—a Sir Somebody Noel, or something. And do you know, Marian, he simply jumped over the wall, without knowing the Boddingtons one bit, just because he saw me

there—wasn't it dreadful of him, after only meeting me once, too?—and then apologised to the old Colonel, who looked as if he would have sunk into the ground in horror at such an awful and unprecedented proceeding. But the moment Mr. Noel said something or other incidentally about his father Sir Somebody, the Colonel became as mild as a lamb, and asked him to lunch at once, and tried to put him sitting right between Minnie and Adela. And Mr. Noel managed to shuffle out of it somehow, and got on one side of me, with Mr. Hawthorn on the other side; and he talked so that he kept me laughing right through the whole of lunch-time.'

'He's awfully amusing,' Marian said with a slight smile.—'And I suppose you rather liked Mr. Noel, too, didn't you, Nora?'

Nora shook her head energetically. 'No,

my dear; not my sort of man at all, really. I certainly wasn't in the least taken with him.'

'Not a little bit even, Nora?'

Nora pulled out the petals of the faded rose she was wearing in her bosom with a petulant gesture. 'Not even a little bit, dear,' she answered decidedly. 'He isn't at all the sort of man I should ever care for. Too dark for me, by several shades, for one thing, Marian. You know, we West Indians never can endure these very dark people.'

'But I'm dark, Nora, and you like me, you know, don't you?'

'Oh, you. Yes; that's quite another thing, Marian. That's nothing, to be dark as you are. Your hair and eyes and complexion are just absolutely perfect, darling. But Mr. Noel—well, he's a shade or two too dark for

me, anyhow; and I don't mind saying so to you candidly.—Mr. Hawthorn's a great deal more my ideal of what a handsome man ought to be. I think his eyes, his hair, and his moustache are just simply lovely, Marian.'

'Why, of course, you and he ought to be friends,' Marian said, a natural thought flashing suddenly across her. 'He comes from Trinidad, just the same as you do. How funny that the two people I've liked best in all the world should both come from the very same little bit of an island. I dare say you used to know some of his people.'

'That's the very funniest part of it all, Marian. I can't recollect anything at all about his family; I don't even remember ever to have heard of them from any Trinidad people.'

Marian looked up quickly from the needle-

work on which she was employed, and said simply: 'I dare say they didn't happen to know your family.'

'Well, that's just what's odd about it, dear,' Nora continued, pulling out her crochet. 'Everybody in Trinidad knows my family. And Mr. Hawthorn's father's in the Legislative Council, too, just like papa; and he himself has been to Cambridge, you know, and is a barrister, and knows Arabic, and is so awfully clever, that amusing Mr. Noel tells me. I can't imagine how on earth it is I've never even heard of him before.'

'Well, at any rate, I'm so awfully glad you really like him, now that you've actually seen him, Nora. One's always so afraid that all one's friends won't like one's future husband.'

'Like him, dear; how on earth could one

help liking him? Why, I think he's simply delightful. And that's so surprising, too, because generally, you know, one's friends *will* go and marry such regular horrid sticks of men, without consulting one. I think he's the nicest man I've ever met anywhere, almost.'

'And the exception is——?'

'Put in for propriety's sake, dear, for fear you should think I was quite too enthusiastic. And do you know, he tells me he's going in for a judgeship in Trinidad; and won't it be splendid, Marian, if he happens to get it, and you both go out there with me, darling? I shall be just too delighted. Won't you, my dearie?'

Marian gave a little sigh. 'I shall be very glad if he gets it in one way,' she said, 'because then, of course, Edward and I will

be able to marry immediately; and papa's so very much opposed to a long engagement.'

'Besides which,' Nora put in frankly, 'you'd naturally like yourself, too, to get married as soon as possible.'

'But then, on the other hand,' Marian went on, smiling quietly, 'it would be a dreadful thing going so far away from all one's friends and relations and so forth. Though, of course, with dear Edward to take care of me, I wouldn't be afraid to go anywhere.'

'Of course not,' Nora said confidently. 'And I shall be there, too, Marian; and we shall have such lovely times together. People have no end of fun in the West Indies, you know. Everybody says it's the most delightful place in the world in the cool season. All the floors are always kept polished all the

year round, without any carpets, just like the continent, and so you can have a dance at any moment, whenever people enough happen to drop in together accidentally of an evening. Mamma used to say there was no end of gaiety; and that she never could endure the stiffness and unsociability of English society, after the hospitable habits of dear old Trinidad.'

'I hope we shall like it,' Marian said, 'if Edward really succeeds in getting this appointment. It'll be a great alleviation to the pain of parting, certainly, if you're going to be there too, Nora.'

'Oh, my dear, you must get married at once, then, you know, and we must arrange somehow to go out to Trinidad together in the same steamer. It'll be just too lovely. I mean to have no end of fun going

out. And when you get there, of course papa'll be able to introduce you and Mr. Hawthorn to all the society in the whole island. I call it just delightful.'

At that moment the servant entered and announced Mr. Hawthorn.

Marian rose from her seat and went forward to meet him. Edward had a long official envelope in his hands, with a large broken seal in red sealing-wax on the back, and the important words, 'On Her Majesty's Service,' printed in very big letters at the lower left-hand corner. Marian trembled a little with excitement, not unmixed with fear, as soon as she saw it.

'Well, dearest,' Edward cried joyously, taking her hand and kissing her once tenderly, in spite of Nora's presence, 'it's all right; I've got the judgeship. And now,

Marian, we shall be able, you see, to get married immediately.'

A woman always succeeds in doing the most incomprehensible and unexpected thing under all circumstances; and Marian, hearing now for the first time that their hearts' desire was at last in a fair way to be accomplished, did not clap her hands or smile with joy, as Edward might have imagined she would do, but fell back upon the sofa, half faint, and burst out suddenly crying.

Edward looked at her tenderly with a mingled look of surprise and sorrow. 'Why, Marian, darling Marian,' he said, a little reproachfully, 'I thought you would be so delighted and rejoiced to hear the news, that I almost ran the whole way to tell you.'

'So I am, Edward, ever so delighted,'

Marian answered sobbing; 'but it's so sudden, so very sudden.'

'She'll be all right in a minute or two, Mr. Hawthorn,' Nora said, looking up at him with an arch smile as she held Marian's hand in hers and bent over her to kiss her forehead. 'She's only taken aback a little at the suddenness of the surprise.—It's so nice, darling, isn't it really? And now, Marian, we shall all be able actually to go out to Trinidad together in the same steamer.'

Edward's heart smote him rather at the strange way Marian had received the news that so greatly delighted him. It was very natural, after all, no doubt. Every girl feels the wrench of having to leave her father's house and her mother and her familiar surroundings. But still, he somehow felt

vaguely within himself that it seemed like an evil omen for their future happiness in the Trinidad judgeship; and it dashed his joy not a little at the moment when his dearest hopes appeared just about to be so happily and successfully realised.

CHAPTER IV.

It was a brilliant, cloudless, tropical day at Agualta Estate, Trinidad; and the cocoa-nut palms in front of the pretty, picturesque, low-roofed bungalow were waving gracefully in the light sea-breeze that blew fresh across the open cane-pieces from the distant horizon of the broad Atlantic. Most days, indeed, except during the rainy season, were brilliant enough in all conscience at beautiful Agualta: the sun blazed all day long in a uniform hazy-white sky, not blue, to be sure, as in a northern climate, but bluish and cloudless; and the sea shone below, hazy-white, in the

dim background, beyond the waving palm-trees, and the broad-leaved bananas, and the long stretch of bright-green cane-pieces that sloped down in endless succession towards the beach and the breakers. Agualta House itself was perched, West India fashion, on the topmost summit of a tall and lonely rocky peak, a projecting spur or shoulder from the main mass of the Trinidad mountains. They chose the very highest and most beautiful situations they could find for their houses, those old matter-of-fact West Indian planters, not so much out of a taste for scenery—for their mental horizon was for the most part bounded by rum and sugar—but because a hill-top was coolest and breeziest, and coolness is the one great practical desideratum in a West Indian residence. Still, the houses that they built

on these airy heights incidentally enjoyed the most exquisite prospects; and Agualta itself was no exception to the general rule in this matter. From the front piazza you looked down upon a green ravine, crowded with tree-ferns and other graceful tropical vegetation; on either side, rocky peaks broke the middle distance with their jagged tors and precipitous needles; while far away beyond the cane-grown plain that nestled snugly in the hollow below, the sky-line of the Atlantic bounded the view, with a dozen sun-smit rocky islets basking like great floating whales upon the grey horizon. No lovelier view in the whole of luxuriant beautiful Trinidad than that from the creeper-covered front piazza of the white bungalow of old Agualta.

Through the midst of the ravine, the

little river from which the estate took its Spanish name—curiously corrupted upon negro lips into the form of Wagwater—tumbled in white sheets of dashing foam between the green foliage 'in cataract after cataract to the sea.' Here and there, the overarching clumps of feathery bamboo hid its course for a hundred yards or so, as seen from the piazza; but every now and again it gleamed forth, white and conspicuous once more, as it tumbled headlong down its steep course over some rocky barrier. You could trace it throughout like a long line of light among all the tangled, glossy, dark-green foliage of that wild and overgrown tropical gully.

The Honourable James Hawthorn, owner of Agualta, was sitting out in a cane arm-chair, under the broad shadow of the great

mango-tree on the grassy terrace in front of the piazza. A venerable grey-haired, grey-bearded man, with a calm, clear-cut, resolute face, the very counterpart of his son Edward's, only grown some thirty years older, and sterner too, and more unbending.

'Mr. Dupuy's coming round this morning, Mary,' Mr. Hawthorn said to the placid, gentle old lady in the companion-chair beside him. 'He wants to look at some oxen I'm going to get rid of, and he thinks, perhaps, he'd like to buy them.'

'Mr. Dupuy!' Mrs. Hawthorn answered, with a slight shudder of displeasure as she spoke. 'I really wish he wasn't coming. I can't bear that man, somehow. He always seems to me the worst embodiment of the bad old days that are dead and gone, Jamie.'

The old gentleman hummed an air to himself reflectively. 'We mustn't be too hard upon him, my dear,' he said after a moment's pause, in a tone of perfect resignation. 'They were brought up in a terrible school, those old-time slavery Trinidad folk, and they can't help bearing the impress of a bad system upon them to the very last moment of their existence. I think so meanly of them for their pride and intolerance, that I take care not to imitate it. You remember what Shelley says: "Let scorn be not repaid with scorn." That's how I always feel, Mary, towards Mr. Dupuy and all his fellows.'

Mrs. Hawthorn bit her lip as she answered slowly: 'All the same, Jamie, I wish he wasn't coming here this morning; and this the English mail-day, too! We

shall get our letter from Edward by-and-by, you know, dear. I hate to have these people coming breaking in upon us the very day we want to be at home by ourselves, to have a quiet hour alone with our dear boy over in England.'

'Here they come, at any rate, Mary,' the old gentleman said, pointing with his hand down the steep ravine to where a couple of men on mountain ponies were slowly toiling up the long zigzag path that climbed the shoulder. 'Here they come, Theodore Dupuy himself, and that young Tom Dupuy as well, behind him. There's one comfort, at any rate, in the position of Agualta—you can never possibly be taken by surprise; you can always see your visitors coming half an hour before they get here. Run in, dear, and see about having enough for

lunch, will you, for Tom Dupuy's sure to stop until he's had a glass of our old Madeira.'

'I dislike Tom Dupuy, I think, even worse than his old uncle, Jamie,' the bland old lady answered softly in her pleasant voice, exactly as if she was saying that she loved him dearly. 'He's a horrid young man, so selfish and narrow-minded; and I hope you won't ever ask him again to come to Agualta. I can hardly even manage to be decently polite to him.'

The two strangers slowly wound their way up the interminable zigzags that led along the steep shoulders of the Agualta peak, and emerged at last from under the shadow of the green mango grove close beside the grassy terrace in front of the piazza. The elder of the two, Nora's father,

was a jovial, round-faced, close-shaven man, with a copious growth of flowing white hair, that fell in long patriarchal locks around his heavy neck and shoulders; a full-blooded, easy-going, proud face to look at, yet not without a certain touch of gentlemanly culture and old-fashioned courtesy. The younger man, Tom Dupuy, his nephew, looked exactly what he was—a born boor, awkward in gait and lubberly in feature, with a heavy hanging lower jaw, and a pair of sleepy boiled fish eyes, that stared vacantly out in sheepish wonder upon a hopelessly dull and blank creation.

Mr. Hawthorn moved courteously to the gate to meet them. 'It's a long pull and a steep pull up the hill, Mr. Dupuy,' he said as he shook hands with him. 'Let me take your pony round to the stables.—Here, Jo!'

to a negro boy who stood showing his white teeth beside the gateway; 'put up Mr. Dupuy's horse, do you hear, my lad, and Mr. Tom's too, will you?—How are you, Mr. Tom? So you've come over with your uncle as well, to see this stock I want to sell, have you?'

The elder Dupuy bowed politely as Mr. Hawthorn held out his hand, and took it with something of the dignified old West Indian courtesy; he had been to school at Winchester forty years before, and the remote result of that half-forgotten old English training was still plainly visible even now in a certain outer urbanity and suavity of demeanour. But young Tom held out his hand awkwardly like a born boor, and dropped it again snappishly as soon as Mr. Hawthorn had taken it, merely answering,

in a slow drawling West Indian voice, partly caught from his own negro servants: 'Yes, I've come over to see the stock; we want some oxen. Cane's good this season; we shall have a capital cutting.'

'Is the English mail in?' Mr. Hawthorn asked anxiously, as they took their seats in the piazza to rest themselves for a while after their ride, before proceeding to active business. That one solitary fortnightly channel of communication with the outer world assumes an importance in the eyes of remote colonists which can hardly even be comprehended by our bustling, stay-at-home English people.

'It is,' Mr. Dupuy replied, taking the proffered glass of Madeira from his host as he answered. Old-fashioned wine-drinking hospitality still prevails largely in the West

Indies. 'I got my letters just as I was starting. Yours will be here before long, I don't doubt, Mr. Hawthorn. I had news, important news in my budget this morning. My daughter, sir, my daughter Nora, who has been completing her education in England, is coming out to Trinidad by the next steamer.'

'You must be delighted at the prospect of seeing her,' Mr. Hawthorn answered with a slight sigh. 'I only wish I were going as soon to see my dear boy Edward.'

Mr. Dupuy's lip curled faintly as he replied in a careless manner: 'Ah, yes, to be sure. Your boy's in England, Mr. Hawthorn, isn't he? If I recollect right, you sent him to Cambridge.—Ah, yes, I thought so, to Cambridge. A very excellent thing for you to do with him. If you take my advice,

my dear sir, you'll let him stop in the old country—a much better place for him in every way than this island.'

'I mean to,' Mr. Hawthorn answered in a low voice. 'God forbid that I should ever be a party to bringing him out here to Trinidad.'

'Oh, certainly not—certainly not. I quite agree with you. Far better for him to stop where he is, and take his chance of making a living for himself in England. Not that he can be at any loss in that matter either. You must be in a position to make him very comfortable too, Mr. Hawthorn! Fine estate, Agualta, and turns out a capital brand of rum and sugar.'

'Best vacuum-pan and centrifugal in the whole island,' Tom Dupuy put in parenthetically. 'Turned out four hundred and

thirty-four hogsheads of sugar and three hundred and ninety puncheons of rum last season—largest yield of any estate in the Windward Islands, except Mount Arlington. You don't catch me out of it in any matter where sugar's in question, I can tell you.'

'But my daughter, Mr. Hawthorn,' the elder Dupuy went on, smiling, and sipping his Madeira in a leisurely fashion—'my daughter means to come out to join me by the next steamer; and my nephew Tom and I are naturally looking forward to her approaching arrival with the greatest anxiety. A young lady in Miss Dupuy's position, I need hardly say to you, who has been finishing her education at a good school in England, comes out to Trinidad under exceptionally favourable circumstances. She will have much here to interest her in society,

and we hope she will enjoy herself and make herself happy.'

'For my part,' Tom Dupuy put in brusquely, 'I don't hold at all with this sending young women from Trinidad across the water to get educated in England—not a bit of it. What's the good of it?—that's what I always want to know—what's the good of it? What do they pick up there, I should like to hear, except a lot of trumpery Radical fal-lal, that turns their heads, and fills them brimful of all sorts of romantic topsy-turvy notions? I've never been to England myself, thank goodness, and what's more, I don't ever want to go, that's certain. But I've known lots of fellows that have been, and have spent a deuce of a heap of money over their education too, at one place or another—I don't even know the names of 'em—and when

they've come back, so far as I could see, they've never known a bit more about rum or sugar than other fellows that had never set foot for a single minute outside the island —no, nor for that matter, not so much either. Of course, it's all very well for a person in your son's position, Mr. Hawthorn; that's quite another matter. He's gone to England, and he's going to stay there. If I were he, I should do as he does. But what on earth can be the use of sending a girl in my cousin Nora's station in life over to England, just on purpose to set her against her own flesh and blood and her own people? Why, it really passes my comprehension.'

Mr. Dupuy's forehead puckered slightly as Tom spoke, and the corners of his mouth twitched ominously; but he answered in a tone of affected nonchalance: 'It's a pity,

Mr. Hawthorn, that my nephew Tom should take this unfavourable view of an English education, because, you see, it's our intention, as soon as my daughter, Miss Dupuy, arrives from England, to arrange a marriage at a very early date between himself and his cousin Nora. Pimento Valley, as you know, is entailed in the male line to my nephew Tom; and Orange Grove is in my own disposal, to leave, of course, to my only daughter. But Mr. Tom Dupuy and I both think it would be a great pity that the family estates should be divided, and should in part pass out of the family; so we've arranged between us that Mr. Tom is to marry my daughter Nora, and that Orange Grove and Pimento Valley are to pass together to their children's children.'

'An excellent arrangement,' Mr. Haw-

thorn put in, with a slight smile. 'But suppose—just for argument's sake—that Miss Dupuy were not to fall in with it?'

Mr. Dupuy's brow clouded over still more evidently. 'Not to fall in with it!' he cried excitedly, tossing off the remainder of his Madeira—'not to fall in with it!—not to fall in with it! Why, Mr. Hawthorn, what the dickens do you mean, sir? Of course, if her father bids her, she'll fall in with it immediately. If she doesn't—why, then, by Jove, sir, I'll just simply have to make her. She shall marry Tom Dupuy the minute I order her to. She should marry a one-eyed man with a wooden leg if her father commanded it. She shall do whatever I tell her. I'll stand no refusing and shilly-shallying. By George, sir, if there's a vice that I hate and

detest, it's the vice of obstinacy. I'll stand no obstinacy, and that I can tell you.'

'No obstinacy in those about you,' Mr. Hawthorn put in suggestively.

'By Jove, sir, no—not in those about me. Other people, of course, I can't be answerable for, though I'd like to flog every obstinate fellow I come across, just to cure him of his confounded temper. Oh, no; I'll stand no obstinacy. Why, sir, I'll tell you what I once did with a horse of mine which had an obstinate temper. I put him at a cactus hedge, over in Pimento Valley, and the brute was afraid of the spines, and wouldn't face it. Well, I wasn't going to stand that, of course; so I dug the spur into his side and put him at it again; and again he refused it. I tried a third time, and a third time the brute hesitated. That put my blood up,

and I dug the spurs in again and again, and rode him at it full tilt till his sides were all raw and bleeding. But still the frightened brute was too much afraid of it ever to jump it. "By the powers," said I, "if I stop here all day, my friend, I'll make you jump it, or you'll never go back again alive to your confounded stable." Well, I put him at it again and again for more than two hours; and then I saw he'd made up his mind that he wouldn't do it. Of course, I wasn't going to stand any such confounded obstinacy as that; so I got off, tied him deliberately to the biggest cactus, whipped him until he'd cut his legs all to pieces, dashing up against it, and then took out my horse-pistol and shot him dead immediately on the spot. That's what I did with him, Mr. Hawthorn.

Oh, no, sir; I can't endure obstinacy—in man or beast, I can't endure it.'

'So it would seem,' Mr. Hawthorn replied dryly. 'I hope sincerely, Miss Dupuy will find the choice you have made for her a suitable and satisfactory one.'

'Suitable, sir! Why, of course it's suitable; and as to satisfactory, well, if I say she's got to take him, she'll have to be satisfied with him, willy-nilly.'

'But she won't!' Tom Dupuy interrupted sullenly, flicking his boot with his short riding-whip in a vicious fashion. 'She won't, you may take my word for it, Uncle Theodore. I can't imagine why it is; but these young women who've been educated in England, they'll never be satisfied with a planter for a husband. They think a gentleman and a son of gentlemen for fifty

generations isn't a good enough match for such fine ladies as themselves; and they go running off after some of these red-coated military fellows down in the garrison over yonder, many of whom, to my certain knowledge, Mr. Hawthorn, are nothing more than the sons of tailors across there in England. I'll bet you a sovereign, Uncle Theodore, that Nora'll refuse to so much as look at the heir of Pimento Valley, the minute she sees him.'

'But why do you think so, Mr. Tom,' their host put in, 'before the young lady has even made your acquaintance?'

'Ah, I know well enough,' Tom Dupuy answered, with a curious leer of unintelligent cunning. 'I know the ways and the habits of the women. They go away over there to England; they get themselves crammed with

French and German, and music and drawing, and all kinds of unnecessary accomplishments. They pick up a lot of nonsensical new-fangled Radical notions about Am I not a Man and a Brother? and all that kind of Methody humbug. They think an awful lot of themselves because they can play and sing and gabble Italian. And they despise us West Indians, gentlemen and planters, because we can't parley-voo all their precious foreign lingoes, and don't know as much as they do about who composed *Yankee Doodle*. I know them—I know them; I know their ways and their manners. Culture, they call it. I call it a deuced lot of trumpery nonsense. Why, Mr. Hawthorn, I assure you I've known some of these fine new-fangled English-taught young women who'd sooner talk to a coloured doctor, as black as a com-

mon nigger almost, just because he'd been educated at Oxford, or Edinburgh, or somewhere, than to me myself, the tenth Dupuy in lineal succession at Pimento Valley.'

'Indeed,' Mr. Hawthorn answered innocently—no other alternative phrase committing him, as he thought, to so small an opinion on the merits of the question.—'But do you know, Mr. Tom, I don't believe any person of the Dupuy blood is very likely to take up with these strange modern English heresies that so much surprise you.'

'Quite true, sir,' Mr. Dupuy the elder answered with prompt self-satisfaction, mistaking his host's delicate tone of covert satire for the voice of hearty concurrence and full approval. 'You're quite right there, Mr. Hawthorn, I'm certain. No born Dupuy of Orange Grove would ever be taken in by any

of that silly clap-trap humanitarian rubbish. No foolish Exeter Hall nonsense about the fighting Dupuys, sir, I can assure you—root and branch, not a single ounce of it. It isn't in them, Mr. Hawthorn—it isn't in them.'

'So I think,' Mr. Hawthorn answered quietly. 'I quite agree with you—it isn't in them.'

As he spoke, a negro servant, neatly dressed in a cool white linen livery, entered the piazza with a small budget of letters on an old-fashioned Spanish silver salver. Mr. Hawthorn took them up eagerly. 'The English mail!' he said with an apologetic look towards his two guests. 'You'll excuse my just glancing through them, Mr. Dupuy, won't you? I can never rest, the moment the mail's in, until I know that my dear boy in England is still really well and happy.'

Mr. Dupuy nodded assent with a condescending smile; and the master of Agualta broke open his son's envelope with a little eager hasty flutter. He ran his eye hurriedly down the first page; and then, with a sudden cry, he laid down the letter rapidly on the table, and called out aloud: 'Mary, Mary!'

Mrs. Hawthorn came out at once from the little boudoir behind the piazza, whose cool Venetian blinds gave directly upon the part where they were sitting.

'Mary, Mary!' Mr. Hawthorn cried, utterly regardless of his two visitors' presence, 'what on earth do you think has happened? Edward is coming out to us—coming out immediately. Oh, my poor boy, my poor boy, this is too unexpected! He's coming out to us at once, at once, without a single moment's warning!'

Mrs. Hawthorn took up the letter and read it through hastily with a woman's quickness; then she laid it down again, and looked blankly at her trembling husband in evident distress; but neither of them said a single word to one another.

The elder Dupuy was the first to break the ominous silence. 'Not by the next steamer, I suppose?' he inquired curiously.

Mr. Hawthorn nodded in reply. 'Yes, yes; by the next steamer.'

As he spoke, Tom Dupuy glanced at his uncle with a meaning glance, and then went on stolidly as ever: 'How about these cattle, though, Mr. Hawthorn?'

The old man looked back at him half angrily, half contemptuously. 'Go and look at the cattle yourself, if you like, Mr. Tom,' he said haughtily.—'Here, Jo, you take

young Mr. Dupuy round to see those Cuban bullocks in the grass-piece, will you? I shall meet your uncle at the Legislative Council on Thursday, and then, if he likes, he can talk over prices with me. I have something else to do at present beside haggling and debating over the sale of bullocks; I must go down to Port-of-Spain immediately, immediately—this very minute.—You must please excuse me, Mr. Dupuy, for my business is most important.—Dick, Isaac, Thomas!—some one of you there, get Pride of Barbadoes saddled at once, very fast, will you, and bring her round here to me at the front-door the moment she's ready.'

'And Tom,' the elder Dupuy whispered to his nephew confidentially, as soon as their host had gone back into the house to prepare for his journey, 'I have business, too,

in Port-of-Spain, immediately. You go and look at the bullocks if you like—that's your department. I shall ride down the hills at once, and into town with old Hawthorn.'

Tom looked at him with a vacant stare of boorish unintelligence. 'Why, what do you want to go running off like that for,' he asked, open-mouthed, 'without even waiting to see the cattle? What the dickens does it matter to you, I should like to know, whether old Hawthorn's precious son is coming to Trinidad or not, Uncle Theodore?'

The uncle looked back at him with undisguised contempt. 'Why, you fool, Tom,' he answered quietly, 'you don't suppose I want to let Nora come out alone all the way from England to Trinidad in the very same steamer with that man Hawthorn's son Edward? Impossible, impossible!—Here, you

nigger fellow you, grinning over there at me like a chattering monkey, bring my mare out of the stable at once, sir, will you—do you hear me, image?—for I'm going to ride down direct to Port-of-Spain this very minute along with your master. Hurry up, there, jackanapes!'

CHAPTER V.

THE letter from Edward that had so greatly perturbed old Mr. Hawthorn had been written, of course, some twenty days before he received it, for the mail takes about that time, as a rule, in going from Southampton across the Atlantic to the port of Trinidad. Edward had already told his father of his long-standing engagement to Marian; but the announcement and acceptance of the district judgeship had been so hurried, and the date fixed for his departure was so extremely early, that he had only just had time by the first mail to let his father know of his ap-

proaching marriage, and his determination to proceed at once to the West Indies by the succeeding steamer. Three weeks was all the interval allowed him by the inexorable red-tape department of the Colonial Office for completing his hasty preparations for his marriage, and setting sail to undertake his newly acquired judicial functions.

'Three weeks, my dear,' Nora cried in despair to Marian; 'why, you know, it can't possibly be done! It's simply impracticable. Do those horrid government-office people really imagine a girl can get together a trousseau, and have all the bridesmaids' dresses made, and see about the house and the breakfast, and all that sort of thing, and get herself comfortably married, all within a single fortnight? They're just like all men; they think

you can do things in less than no time. It's absolutely preposterous.'

'Perhaps,' Marian answered, 'the government-office people would say they engaged Edward to take a district judgeship, and didn't stipulate anything about his getting married before he went out to Trinidad to take it.'

'Oh, well, you know, if you choose to look at it in that way, of course one can't reasonably grumble at them for their absurd hurrying. But still, the horrid creatures ought to have a little consideration for a girl's convenience. Why, we shall have to make up our minds at once, without the least proper deliberation, what the bridesmaids' dresses are to be, and begin having them cut out and the trimmings settled this very morning. A wedding at a fortnight's notice!

I never in my life heard of such a thing. I wonder, for my part, your mamma consents to it.—Well, well, I shall have you to take charge of me going out, that's one comfort; and I shall have my bridesmaid's dress made so that I can wear it a little altered, and cut square in the bodice, when I get to Trinidad, for a best dinner dress. But it's really awfully horrid having to make all one's preparations for the wedding and for going out in such a terrible unexpected hurry.'

However, in spite of Nora, the preparations for the wedding were duly made within the appointed fortnight, even that important item of the bridesmaids' dresses being quickly settled to everybody's satisfaction. Strange that when two human beings propose entering into a solemn contract together for the future governance of their entire joint existence, the

thoughts of one of them, and that the one to whom the change is most infinitely important, should be largely taken up for some weeks beforehand with the particular clothes she is to wear on the morning when the contract is publicly ratified! Fancy the ambassador who signs the treaty being mainly occupied for the ten days of the preliminary negotiations with deciding what sort of uniform and how many orders he shall put on upon the eventful day of the final signature!

At the end of that short hurry-scurrying fortnight, the wedding actually took place; and an advertisement in the *Times* next morning duly announced among the list of marriages, 'At Holy Trinity, Brompton, by the Venerable Archdeacon Ord, uncle of the bride, assisted by the Rev. Augustus Savile, B.D., EDWARD BERESFORD HAWTHORN, M.A.,

Barrister-at-law, of the Inner Temple, late Fellow of St. Catherine's College, Cambridge, and District Judge of the Westmoreland District, Trinidad, to MARIAN ARBUTHNOT, only daughter of General C. S. Ord, C.I.E., formerly of the H.E.I.C. Bengal Infantry.' 'The bride's toilet,' said *The Queen*, next Saturday, 'consisted of white broché satin de Lyon, draped with deep lace flounces, caught up with orange blossoms. The veil was of tulle, secured to the hair with a pearl crescent and stars. The bouquet was composed of rare exotics.' In fact, to the coarse and undiscriminating male intelligence, the whole attire, on which so much pains and thought had been hurriedly bestowed, does not appear to have differed in any respect whatsoever from that of all the other brides one has ever looked at during the entire

course of a reasonably long and varied life-time.

After the wedding, however, Marian and Edward could only afford a single week by way of a honeymoon, in that most overrun by brides and bridegrooms of all English districts, the Isle of Wight, as being nearest within call of Southampton, whence they had to start on their long ocean voyage. The aunt in charge was to send down Nora to meet them at the hotel the day before the steamer sailed ; and the General and Mrs. Ord were to see them off, and say a long good-bye to them on the morning of sailing.

Harry Noel, too, who had been best-man at the wedding, for some reason most fully known to himself, professed a vast desire to 'see the last of poor Hawthorn,' before he left for parts unknown in the Caribbean ; and

with that intent, duly presented himself at a Southampton hotel on the day before their final departure. It was not purely by accident, however, either on his own part or on Marian Hawthorn's, that when they took a quiet walk that evening in some fields behind the battery, he found himself a little in front with Nora Dupuy, while the newly-married pair, as was only proper, brought up the rear in a conjugal *tête-à-tête*.

'Miss Dupuy,' Harry said suddenly, as they reached an open space in the fields, with a clear view uninterrupted before them, there's something I wish to say to you before you leave to-morrow for Trinidad—something a little premature, perhaps, but under the circumstances—as you're leaving so soon—I can't delay it. I've seen very little of you, as yet, Miss Dupuy, and you've seen very little

of me, so I dare say I owe you some apology for this strange precipitancy; but—— Well, you're going away at once from England; and I may not see you again for—for some months; and if I allow you to go without having spoken to you, why——'

Nora's heart throbbed violently. She didn't care very much for Harry Noel at first sight, to be sure; but still, she had never till now had a regular offer of marriage made to her; and every woman's heart beats naturally —I believe—when she finds herself within measurable distance of her first offer. Besides, Harry was the heir to a baronetcy, and a great catch, as most girls counted; and even if you don't want to marry a baronet, it's something at least to be able to say to yourself in future, 'I refused an offer to be Lady Noel.' Mind you, as women go, the

heir to an old baronetcy and twelve thousand a year is not to be despised, though you may not care a single pin about his mere personal attractions. A great many girls who would refuse the man upon his own merits, would willingly say 'Yes' at once to the title and the income. So Nora Dupuy, who was, after all, quite as human as most other girls—if not rather more so—merely held her breath hard, and tried her best to still the beating of her wayward heart, as she answered back with childish innocence: 'Well, Mr. Noel, in that case, what would happen?'

'In that case, Miss Dupuy,' Harry replied, looking at her pretty little pursed-up guileless mouth with a hungry desire to kiss it incontinently then and there—'why, in that case, I'm afraid some other man—some handsome young Trinidad planter or other—might carry

off the prize on his own account before I had ventured to put in my humble claim for it.—Miss Dupuy, what's the use of beating about the bush, when I see by your eyes you know what I mean? From the moment I first saw you, I said to myself, "She's the one woman I have ever seen whom I feel instinctively I could worship for a lifetime." Answer me Yes. I'm no speaker. But I love you. Will you take me?'

Nora twisted the tassel of her parasol nervously between her finger and thumb for a few seconds; then she looked back at him full in the face with her pretty girlish open eyes, and answered with charming naïveté—just as if he had merely asked her whether she would take another cup of tea: 'No, thank you, Mr. Noel; I don't think so.'

Harry Noel smiled with amusement—in

spite of this curt and simple rejection—at the oddity of such a reply to such a question. 'Of course,' he said, glancing down at her pretty little feet to hide his confusion, 'I didn't expect you to answer me *Yes* at once on so very short an acquaintance as ours has been. I acknowledge it's dreadfully presumptuous in me to have dared to put you a question like that, when I know you can have seen so very little in me to make me worth the honour you'd be bestowing upon me.'

'Quite so,' Nora murmured mischievously, in a parenthetical undertone. It wasn't kind; I dare say it wasn't even lady-like; but then you see she was really, after all, only a school-girl.

Harry paused, half abashed for a second at this very literal acceptance of his conventional expression of self-depreciation. He

hardly knew whether it was worth while continuing his suit in the face of such exceedingly outspoken discouragement. Still, he had something to say, and he determined to say it. He was really very much in love with Nora, and he wasn't going to lose his chance outright just for the sake of what might be nothing more than a pretty girl's provoking coyness.

'Yes,' he went on quietly, without seeming to notice her little interruption, 'though you haven't yet seen anything in me to care for, I'm going to ask you, not whether you'll give me any definite promise—it was foolish of me to expect one on so brief an acquaintance—but whether you'll kindly bear in mind that I've told you I love you—yes, I said love you'—for Nora had dashed her little hand aside impatiently at the word. 'And remem-

ber, I shall still hope, until I see you again, you may yet in future reconsider the question. Don't make me any promise, Miss Dupuy; and don't repeat the answer you've already given me; but when you go to Trinidad, and are admired and courted as you needs must be, don't wholly forget that someone in England once told you he loved you—loved you passionately.'

'I'm not likely to forget it, Mr. Noel,' Nora answered with malicious calmness; 'because nobody ever proposed to me before, you know; and one's sure not to forget one's first offer.'

'Miss Dupuy, you are making game of me! It isn't right of you—it isn't generous.'

Nora paused and looked at him again. He was dark, but very handsome. He looked handsomer still when he bridled up a little

It was a very nice thing to look forward to being Lady Noel. How all the other girls at school would have just jumped at it! But no; he was too dark by half to meet her fancy. She couldn't give him the slightest encouragement. 'Mr. Noel,' she said, far more seriously this time, with a little sigh of impatience, 'believe me, I didn't really mean to offend you. I—I like you very much; and I'm sure I'm very much flattered indeed by what you've just been kind enough to say to me. I know it's a great honour for you to ask me to—to ask me what you have asked me. But, you know, I don't think of you in that light, exactly. You will understand what I mean when I say I can't even leave the question open. I—I have nothing to reconsider.'

Harry waited a moment in internal reflec-

tion. He liked her all the better because she said *No* to him. He was man of the world enough to know that ninety-nine girls out of a hundred would have jumped at once at such an eligible offer. 'In a few months,' he said quietly, in an abstracted fashion, 'I shall be paying a visit out in Trinidad.'

'Oh, don't, pray don't,' Nora cried hastily. 'It'll be no use, Mr. Noel, no use in any way. I've quite made up my mind; and I never change it. Don't come out to Trinidad, I beg of you.'

'I see,' Harry said, smiling a little bitterly. 'Someone else has been beforehand with me already. No wonder. I'm not at all surprised at him. How could he possibly see you and help it?' And he looked with unmistakable admiration at Nora's face, all the prettier now for its deep blushes.

'No, Mr. Noel,' Nora answered simply. 'There you are mistaken. There's nobody—absolutely nobody. I've only just left school, you know, and I've seen no one so far that I care for in any way.'

'In that case,' Harry Noel said, in his decided manner, 'the quest will still be worth pursuing. No matter what you say, Miss Dupuy, we shall meet again—before long—in Trinidad. A young lady who has just left school has plenty of time still to reconsider her determinations.'

'Mr. Noel! Please, don't! It'll be quite useless.'

'I must, Miss Dupuy; I can't help myself. You will draw me after you, even if I tried to prevent it. I believe I have had one real passion in my life, and that passion will act upon me like a magnet on

a needle for ever after. I shall go to Trinidad.'

'At any rate, then, you'll remember that I gave you no encouragement, and that for me, at least, my answer is final.'

'I *will* remember, Miss Dupuy—and I won't believe it.'

That evening, as Marian kissed Nora good-night in her own bedroom at the Southampton hotel, she asked archly: 'Well, Nora, what did you answer him?'

'Answer who? what?' Nora repeated hastily, trying to look as if she didn't understand the suppressed antecedent of the personal pronoun.

'My dear girl, it isn't the least use your pretending you don't know what I mean by it. I saw in your face, Nora, when Edward

and I caught you up, what it was Mr. Noel had been saying to you. And how did you answer him? Tell me, Nora!'

'I told him *No*, Marian, quite positively.'

'Oh, Nora!'

'Yes, I did. And he said he'd follow me out to Trinidad; and I told him he really needn't take the trouble, because in any case I could never care for him.'

'O dear, I *am* so sorry. You wicked girl! And, Nora, he's such a nice fellow too! and so dreadfully in love with you! You ought to have taken him.'

'My dear Marian! He's so awfully black, you know. I really believe he must positively be a little coloured.'

CHAPTER VI.

THE three weeks' difference in practical time between England and the West Indies, due to the mail, made the day that Edward and Marian spent at Southampton exactly coincide with the one when Mr. Dupuy and his nephew Tom went up to view old Mr. Hawthorn's cattle at Agualta Estate, Trinidad. On that very same evening, while Nora and Harry were walking together among the fields behind the battery, Mr. Tom Dupuy was strolling leisurely by himself in the cool dusk, four thousand miles away, on one of the innumerable shady bridle-paths that thread the end-

less tangled hills above Pimento Valley. Mr. Tom was smoking a very big Manila cheroot, and was accompanied upon his rounds by a huge and ferocious-looking Cuban blood-hound, the hungry corners of whose great greedy slobbering mouth hung down hideously on either side in loose folds of skin of the most bloodthirsty and sinister aspect. As he went along, Tom Dupuy kept patting affectionately from time to time his four-footed favourite, to whom, nevertheless, every now and again he applied, as it seemed out of pure wantonness, the knotted lash of the cruel dog-whip which he carried jauntily in his right hand. The dog, however, formidable as he was, so far from resenting this unkindly treatment, appeared to find in it something exceedingly congenial to his own proper barbarous nature; for after each such

savage cut upon his bare flanks from the knotted hide, he only cowered for a second, and then fawned the more closely and slavishly than ever upon his smiling master, looking up into his face with a strange approving glance from his dull eyes, that seemed to say: 'Exactly the sort of thing I should do myself, if you were the dog, and I were the whip-holder.'

At a bend of the path, where the road turned suddenly aside to cross the dry bed of a winter torrent, Tom Dupuy came upon a clump of tall cabbage palms, hard by a low mud-built negro-hut, overshadowed in front by two or three huge flowering bushes of crimson hibiscus. A tall, spare, grey-headed negro, in a coarse sack by way of a shirt, with his bare and sinewy arms thrust loosely through the long slits which alone did duty

in the place of sleeve-holes, was leaning as he passed upon a wooden post. The bloodhound, breaking away suddenly from his master, at sight and smell of the black skin, its natural prey, rushed up fiercely towards the old labourer, and leapt upon him with a savage snarl of his big teeth, and an ominous glittering in his great fishy glazed eyeball. But the negro, stronger and more muscular than he looked, instead of flinching, caught the huge brute in his long lean arms, and flung him from him by main force with an angry oath, dashing his great form heavily against the rough pathway. Quick as lightning, the dog, leaping up again at once with diabolical energy in its big flabby mouth, was just about to spring once more upon his scowling opponent, when Tom Dupuy, catching him angrily by his leather collar, threw him down and

held him back, growling fiercely, and showing his huge tearing teeth in a ferocious grin, after the wonted manner of his deadly kind. 'Quiet, Slot, quiet!' the master said, patting his hollow forehead with affectionate admiration. 'Quiet, sir; down this minute! Down, I tell you!—He's death on niggers, Delgado—death on niggers. You should stand out of the way, you know, when you see him coming. Of course these dogs never can abide the scent of you black fellows. The *bookay d'Afreek* always drives a bloodhound frantic.'

The old negro drew himself up haughtily and sternly, and stared back in the insolent face of the slouching young white man with a proud air of native dignity. 'Buckra gentleman hab no right, den, to go about wid dem dog,' he answered angrily, fixing

his piercing fiery eye on the bloodhound's face. 'Dem dog always spring at a black man wherebber dey find him. If you want to keep dem, you should keep dem tied up at de house, so as to do for watch-dog against tievin' naygur. But you doan't got no right o bring dem about de ro-ads, loose dat way, jumpin' up at people's troats, when dem standin' peaceable beside dem own hut here.'

Tom Dupuy laughed carelessly. 'It's their nature, you see, Delgado,' he answered with a pleasant smile, still holding the dog and caressing it lovingly. 'They and their fathers were trained long ago in slavery days to hunt runaway niggers up in the mountains and track them to their hiding-places, and drag them back, alive or dead, to their lawful masters; and of course that makes them run naturally after the smell of a nigger, as

a terrier runs after the smell of a rat. When the rat sees the terrier coming, he scuttles off as hard as his legs can carry him into his hole; and when you see Slot's nose turning round the corner, you ought to scuttle off into your hut as quick as lightning, if you want to keep your black skin whole upon your infernal body. Slot never can abide the smell of a nigger.—Can you, Slot, eh, old fellow?

The negro looked at him with unconcealed aversion. 'I is not a rat, Mistah Dupuy,' he said haughtily. 'I is gentleman myself, same as you is, sah, when I come here over from Africa.'

Tom Dupuy sneered openly in his very face. 'That's the way with all you Africans,' he answered with a laugh, as he flipped the ash idly from his big cheroot. 'I never

knew an imported nigger yet, since I was born, that wasn't a king in his own country. Seems to me they must all be kings over yonder in Congo, with never a solitary subject to divide between them.—But I say, my friend, what's going on over this way to-night, that so many niggers are going up all the time to the Methody chapel? Are you going to preach 'em a missionary sermon?'

Delgado glanced at him a trifle suspiciously. 'Dar is a prayer-meetin', sah,' he said with a cold look in his angry eye, 'up at Gilead. De bredderin gwine to meet dis ebenin'.'

'Ho, ho; so that's it! A prayer-meeting, is it? Well, if I go up there, will you let me attend it?'

Delgado's thick lip curled contemptuously,

as he answered with a frown: 'When cockroach gib dance, him no ax fowl!'

'Ah, I see. The fowl would eat the cockroaches, would he? Well, then, Louis Delgado, I give you fair warning; if you don't want a white man to go and look on at your confounded Methody nigger prayer-meetings, depend upon it it's because you're brewing some mischief or other up there against the constituted authorities. I shall tell my uncle to set his police to look well after you. You're always a bad-blooded, discontented, disaffected fellow, and I believe now you're up to some of your African devilry or other. No obeah, mind you, Delgado—no obeah! Prayer meetings, my good friend, as much as you like; but whatever you do, no obeah.'

'You tink I do obeah because I doan't

will let you go to prayer-meetin'! Dat just like white-man argument. Him tink de naygur can nebber be in de right. Old-time folk has little proverb: "Mountain sheep always guilty when jungle tiger sit to judge him."'

Tom Dupuy laughed and nodded. 'If the sheep in Africa are black sheep,' he retorted clumsily, 'I dare say they're a beastly lot of thieving trespassers.—Good-night, my friend.—Down, Slot, down, good fellow; down, down, down, I tell you!—Good-night, Louis Delgado, and whatever you do, no obeah!'

The negro watched him slowly round the corner, with a suspicious eye kept well fixed upon the reluctant stealthy retreat of the Cuban bloodhound; and as soon as Tom had got safely beyond earshot, he sat down in

the soft dust that formed the bare platform outside his hut, and mumbled to himself, as negroes will do, a loud dramatic soliloquy, in every deep and varying tone of passion and hatred. 'Ha, ha, Mistah Tom Dupuy,' he began quietly, 'so you go about always wid de Cuban bloodhound, an' you laugh to see him spring at de troat ob de black man! You tink dat frighten him from come steal your cane an' your mangoes! You tink de black man afraid ob de dog, yarra! yarra! Ha, dat frighten Trinidad naygur, perhaps, but it doan't frighten salt-water naygur from Africa! I hab charms, I hab potion, I hab draught to quiet him! I doan't afraid ob fifty bloodhound. But it doan't good for buckra gentleman to walk about wid dog that spring at de black man. Black man laugh to-day, perhaps, but press

him heart tight widin him. De time come when black man will find him heart break out, an' de hate in it flow over an' make blood run like dry ribber in de rainy season. Den him sweep away buckra, an' blood-hound, an' all before him; an' seize de country, colour for colour. De land is black, an' de land for de black man. When de black man burst him heart like ribber burst him bank in de rainy season, white man's house snap off before him like bamboo hut when de flood catch it!' As he spoke, he pushed his hands out expansively before him, and gurgled in his throat with fierce inarticulate African gutturals, that seemed to recall in some strange fashion the hollow eddying roar and gurgle of the mountain torrents in the rainy season.

'Chicken doan't nebber lub jackal, yarra,'

he went on after a short pause of expectant triumph; 'an' naygur doan't nebber lub buckra, dat certain. But ob all de buckra in de island ob Trinidad, dem Dupuy is de very worst an' de very contemptfullest. Some day, black man will rise, an' get rid ob dem all for good an' ebber. If I like, I can kill dem all to-day; but I gwine to wait. De great an' terrible day ob de Lard is not come yet. Missy Dupuy ober in England, where de buckra come from. England is de white man's Africa; de missy dar to learn him catechism. I wait till Missy Dupuy come back before I kill de whole family. When de great an' terrible day ob de Lard arrive, I doan't leave a single Dupuy a libbin soul in de island ob Trinidad. Utterly destroy de Amalekite, sait' de Lard, and spare dem not; but slay bot' man an' woman,

infant an' suckling, ox an' sheep, ass an' camel. When I slay dem, I slay dem utterly. De curse ob Saul dat spared Agag shall nebber fall upon Louis Delgado. I slay dem all, an' de missy wid dem, yarra, yarra!'

The last two almost inarticulate words were uttered with a horrible yell of triumph; and as Louis Delgado uttered them shrilly, he drew the fingers of his right hand with a savage joy across his bared and upturned neck, and accompanied that hideously significant action with a hissing noise of his breath, puffed out suddenly with an explosive burst between his white and closely-pressed teeth. After a minute he went on again; but this time, hearing footsteps approaching, he broke out into a loud and horrible soliloquy of exultation in his own native African language.

It was a deep, savage-sounding West Coast dialect, full of harsh and barbaric clicks or gutturals; for Louis Delgado, as Tom Dupuy had rightly said, was 'an imported African'—a Coromantyn, sold as a slave some thirty years before to a Cuban slave trader trying to break the blockade on the coast, and captured with all her living cargo by an English cruiser off Sombrero Island. The liberated slaves had been landed, according to custom, at the first British port where the cutter touched; and thus Louis Delgado—as he learned to call himself—a wild African born, from the Coromantyn seaboard, partially Anglicised and outwardly Christianised, was now a common West Indian plantation hand on the two estates of Orange Grove and Pimento Valley. There are dozens of such semi-civilised imported negroes still to be

found under similar circumstances in every one of the West India islands.

As the steps gradually approached nearer, it became plain, from the soft footfall in the dust of the bridle-path, that it was a shoeless black person who was coming towards him. In a minute more, the new-comer had turned the corner, and displayed herself as a young and comely negress—pretty with the round, good-humoured African prettiness of smooth black skin, plump cheeks, clear eyes, and regular, even pearl-white teeth. The girl was dressed in a loose Manchester cotton print, brightly coloured, and not unbecoming, with a tidy red bandana bound turban-wise around her shapely head, but barefooted, barelegged, and bare of arm, neck, and shoulder. Her figure was good, as the figure of most negresses usually is; and she

held herself erect and upright with the peculiar lithe gracefulness said to be induced by the universal practice of carrying pails of water and other burdens on the top of the head, from the very earliest days of negro childhood. As she approached Delgado, she first smiled and showed all her pretty teeth, as she uttered the customary polite salutation of 'Marnin'! sah, marnin'!' and then dropped a profound curtsy with an unmistakable air of awe and reverence.

Louis Delgado affected not to observe the girl for a moment, and went on jabbering loudly and fiercely to himself in his swift and fluent African jargon. But it was evident that his hearer was deeply impressed at once by this rapt and prophetic inattention of the strange negro, who spoke with tongues to vacant space in such an

awful and intensely realistic fashion. She paused for a while and looked at him intently; then, when he stopped for a second to take breath in the midst of one of his passionate incoherent outbursts, she came a step nearer to him and curtsied again, at the same time that she muttered in a rather injured querulous treble: 'Mistah Delgado, you no hear me, sah? You no listen to me? I tellin' you marnin'.'

The old man broke off suddenly, as if recalled to himself and common earth by some disenchanting touch, and answered dreamily: 'Marnin', Missy Rosina. Marnin', le-ady. You gwine up to Gilead now to de prayer-meetin'?'

Rosina, glancing down at the Bible and hymn-book in her plump black hand, answered demurely: 'Yes, sah, I gwine dar.'

Delgado shook himself vigorously, as if in the endeavour to recover from some unearthly trance, and went on in his more natural manner: 'I gwine up too, to pray wid de bredderin. You want me for someting? You callin' to me for help you?'

Rosina dropped her voice a little as she replied in her shrill tone: 'Dem say you is African, Mistah Delgado. Naygur from Africa know plenty spell for bring back le-ady's lubber.'

Delgado nodded. 'Dem say true,' he answered. 'Creole [1] naygur doan't can make spell same as African. Coromantyn naygur hab plenty oracle, like de ephod ob de high-

[1] The word *Creole* is much misunderstood by most English people. In its universal West Indian sense it is applied to any person, white, black, or mulatto, born in the West Indies, as opposed to outsiders, European, American, or African.

pries' dat de word ob de Lard command to Aaron. De oracles ob Aaron descend in right line to de chiefs ob de Coromantyn. Kwámina atinásu Koromantini marrah osráman etchwi ntwa.'

The words themselves were simple enough, being merely Fantee for, 'Here am I, Kwámina the Coromantyn, with my thunder-stones that cool the heart;' but they struck the Creole-born negress with a certain mute awe and terror, after which she hardly dared for a moment to open her mouth. As soon as she found her tongue again, she muttered softly: 'Dem say you is great chief in your own country.'

The old man drew himself up with a haughty air. 'Me fader,' he answered with evident pride, 'hab twelve wives, all princess, an' I is de eldest son ob de eldest. King

Blay fight him, an' take me prisoner, an' sell me slabe, an' dat is how I come to work now ober here on Mistah Dupuy plantation. But by birt', I is prince, an' descendant ob Eleazar, de son ob Aaron, de high-pries' ob Israel.'

After a pause, he asked quickly: 'Who dis lubber dat you want spell for?'

'Isaac Pourtalès.'

'Pourtalès! Him mulatto! What for pretty naygur girl like you want to go an' lub mulatto? Mulatto bad man. Old-time folk say, mulatto always hate him fader an despise him mudder. Him fader de white man, an' mulatto hate white; him mudder de black girl, an' mulatto despise black.'

Rosina hung her head down slightly on one side, and put the little finger of her left hand with artless coyness into the

corner of her mouth. 'I doan't know, sah,' she said sheepishly after a short pause; 'but I feel somehow as if I lub Isaac Pourtalès.'

Delgado grinned a sinister grin. 'Very well, Missy Rosy,' he said shortly, 'I gain him lub for you. Wait here one, two, tree minute, le-ady, while I run in find me Bible.'

In a few seconds he came out again, dressed in his black coat for meeting, with a Bible and hymn-book in one hand, and a curious volume in the other, written in strange, twisted, twirligig characters, such as Rosina had never before in her life set eyes on. 'See here!' he cried, opening it wide before her; 'dat is book ob spells. Dat is African spell for gain lubber. I explain him to you'—and his hand turned

rapidly over several of the brown and well-thumbed pages: 'Isaac Pourtalès, mulatto; Rosina Fleming, black le-ady; dat is de page. Hear what de spell say.' And he ran his finger line by line along the strange characters, as if translating them into his own negro English as he went. '"Take toot' ob alligator," same as dis one'—and he produced a few alligators' teeth from his capacious pocket; '"tie him up for a week in bag wid Savannah flower an' branch of calalue; soak him well in shark's blood" —I gib de blood to you—"den write de name, Isaac Pourtalès, in big letter on slip ob white paper; drop it in de bag; an' burn it all togedder on a Friday ebenin', when it doan't no moon, wid fire ob manchineel wood." Dat will gain de lub ob your lubber, as sure as de gospel.'

The girl listened carefully to the directions, and made Delgado repeat them three times over to her. When she had learned them thoroughly, she said once more: 'How much I got to pay you for dis, eh, sah?'

'Nuffin.'

'Nuffin?'

'No, nuffin. But you must do me favour. You is house serbant at Orange Grove; you must come see me now an' den, an' tell me what go on ober in de house dar.'

'What far, sah?'

'Doan't you ax what far; but listen to me, le-ady. De great an' terrible day ob de Lard will come before long, when de wicked will be cut off from de face ob de eart', an' we shall see de end ob de evil-doer. You read de Prophets?'

'I read dem some time.'

'You read de Prophet Jeremiah, what him say? Hear de tex'. I read him to you. "Deliber up deir children to de famine, an' pour out deir blood by de sword." Dat de Lard's word for all de Dupuys; an' when de missy come from England, de word ob de prophecy comin' true.'

The girl shuddered, and opened wide her big eyes with their great ring of white setting. 'How you know it de Dupuys?' she asked hesitating. 'How you know it dem de prophet 'ludin' to?'

'How I know, Rosina Fleming? How I know it? Because I can expound an interpret de Scripture; for when de understandin' ob de man is enlightened, de mout' speaketh forth wonderful tings. Listen

here; I tellin' you de trut'. Before de missy lib a year in Trinidad, de Lard will sweep away de whole house ob de Dupuys out ob de land for ebber an ebber.'

'But not de missy?' Rosina cried eagerly.

'Ah, de missy! You tink when de black man rise like tiger in him wrath, him spare de missy! No, me fren'. Him doan't gwine to spare her. Old-time folk has proverb: "Hungry jigger no respeck de white foot ob buckra le-ady." De Dupuys is great people now; puffed up wid him pride; look down on de black man. But dem will drop dem bluster bime-by, as soon as deir pride is taken out ob dem wid adversity. When trouble catch bull-dog, den monkey breeches hab to fit him.'

Rosina turned away with a look of

terror. 'You comin' to prayer-meetin'?' she asked hastily. 'De bredderin will all be waitin'.'

Delgado, recalled once more to his alternative character, pushed away the strange volume through the door of his hut, took up his Bible and hymn-book with the gravest solemnity, drew himself up to his full height, and was soon walking along soberly by Rosina's side, as respectable and decorous a native Methodist class-leader as one could wish to see in the whole green island of Trinidad. 'I was glad when dey said unto me,' he murmured to himself audibly, with an unctuous smile upon his lank black jaws, "Let us go into de courts ob his house."'

Those who judge superficially of men and minds would say at once that Delgado

was a hypocrite. Those who know what religion really means to inferior races—a strange but sincere jumble of phrases, emotions, superstitions, and melodies, permeating and consecrating all their acts and all their passions, however evil, violent, or licentious—will recognise at once that in his own mind Louis Delgado was not conscious to himself in the faintest degree of any hypocrisy, craft, or even inconsistency.

CHAPTER VII.

THE morning when Edward and Marian were to start on their voyage to Trinidad, with Nora in their charge, was a beautifully clear, calm, and sunny one. The tiny steam-tender that took them down Southampton Water, from the landing-stage to the moorings where the big ocean-going *Severn* lay at anchor, ploughed her way merrily through the blue ripplets that hardly broke the level surface. Though it was a day of parting, nobody was over-sad. General Ord had come down with Marian, his face bronzed with twenty years of India, but straight and erect still like a

hop-pole, as he stood with his tall thin figure lithe and steadfast on the little quarter-deck. Mrs. Ord was there too, crying a little, of course, as is only decorous on such occasions, yet not more so than a parting always demands from the facile eyes of female humanity. Marian didn't cry much either; she felt so safe in going with Edward, and hoped to be back so soon again on a summer visit to her father and mother. As for Nora, Nora was always bright as the sunshine, and could never see anything except the bright side of things. 'We shall take such care of dear Marian in Trinidad, Mrs. Ord!' she said gaily. 'You'll see her home again on a visit in another twelvemonth, with more roses on her cheek than she's got now, when she's had a taste of our delicious West Indian mountain air.'

'And if Trinidad suits Miss Ord—Mrs. Hawthorn, I mean—dear me, how stupid of me!' Harry Noel put in quietly, 'half as well as it seems to have suited you, Miss Dupuy, we shall have no cause to complain of Hawthorn for having taken her out there.'

'Oh, no fear of that,' Nora answered, smiling one of her delicious childish smiles. 'You don't know how delightful Trinidad is, Mr. Noel; it's really one of the most charming places in all Christendom.'

'On your recommendation, then,' Harry answered, bowing slightly and looking at her with eyes full of meaning, 'I shall almost be tempted to go out some day, and see for myself how really delightful are these poetical tropics of yours.'

Nora blushed, and her eyes fell slightly. 'You would find them very lovely, no doubt,

Mr. Noel,' she answered, more demurely and in a half-timid fashion; 'but I can't recommend them, you know, with any confidence, because I was such a very little girl when I first came home to England. You had better not come out to Trinidad merely on the strength of my recommendation.'

Harry bowed his head again gravely. 'As you will,' he said. 'Your word is law. And yet, perhaps, some day, I shouldn't be surprised either if Hawthorn and Mrs. Hawthorn were to find me dropping in upon them unexpectedly for a scratch dinner. After all, it's a mere nothing nowadays to run across the millpond, as the Yankees call it.'

They reached the *Severn* about an hour before the time fixed for starting, and sat on deck talking together with that curious sense of finding nothing to say which always oppresses

one on the eve of a long parting. It seems as though no subject of conversation sufficiently important for the magnitude of the occasion ever occurred to one: the mere everyday trivialities of ordinary talk sound out of place at such a serious moment. So, by way of something to do, the party soon began to institute a series of observations upon Edward and Marian's fellow-passengers, as they came on board, one after another, in successive batches on the little tender.

'Just look at that brown young man!' Nora cried, in a suppressed whisper, as a tall and gentlemanly looking mulatto walked up the gangway from the puffing tug. 'We shall be positively overwhelmed with coloured people, I declare! There are three Hottentot Venuses down in the saloon already, bound for Haiti; and a San Domingo general, as

black as your hat; and a couple of walnut-coloured old gentlemen going to Dominica. And now, here's another regular brown man coming on board to us. What's his name, I wonder? Oh, there it is, painted as large as life upon his portmanteau! "Dr. Whitaker, Trinidad." Why, my dear, he's actually going the whole way with us. And a doctor too! goodness gracious. Just fancy being attended through a fever by a man of that complexion!'

'Oh, hush, Nora!' Marian cried, in genuine alarm. 'He'll overhear you, and you'll hurt his feelings. Besides, you oughtn't to talk so about other people, whether they hear you or whether they don't.'

'Hurt his feelings, my dear! Oh dear no, not a bit of it. I know them better than you do. My dear Marian, these people haven't

got any feelings; they've been too much accustomed to be laughed at from the time they were babies, ever to have had the chance of acquiring any.'

'Then the more shame,' Edward interrupted gravely, 'to those who have laughed them out of all self-respect and natural feeling. But I don't believe, for my part, there's anybody on earth who doesn't feel hurt at being ridiculed.'

'Ah, that's so nice of you to think and talk like that, Mr. Hawthorn,' Nora answered frankly; 'but you won't think so, you know, I'm quite certain, after you've been a month or two on shore over in Trinidad.'

'Good-morning, ladies and gentlemen,' the captain of the *Severn* put in briskly, walking up to them as they lounged in a group on the clean-scrubbed quarter-deck—'good-morning,

ladies and gentlemen. Fine weather to start on a voyage. Are you all going with us?—Why, bless my heart, if this isn't General Ord! I sailed with you, sir, fifteen years ago now or more, must be, when I was a second officer in the P. and O. service.—You don't remember me; no, I dare say not; I was only a second officer then, and you sat at the captain's table. But I remember you, sir—I remember you. There's more folks know Tom Fool, the proverb says, than Tom Fool knows; and no offence meant, General, nor none be taken. And so you're going out with us now, are you?—going out with us now? Well, you'll sit at the captain's table still, sir, no doubt, you and your party; and as I'm the captain now, you see, why, I shall have a better chance than I used to have of making your acquaintance.'

The captain laughed heartily as he spoke at his own small wit; but General Ord drew himself up rather stiffly, and answered in a somewhat severe tone: 'No, I'm not going out with you this journey myself; but my daughter, who has lately married, and her husband here, are just setting out to their new home over in Trinidad.'

'In Trinidad,' the jolly captain echoed heartily—'in Trinidad! Well, well, beautiful island, beautiful, beautiful! Must mind they don't take too much mainsheet, or catch yellow Jack, or live in the marshes, that's all; otherwise, they'll find it a delightful residence. I took out a young sub-lieutenant, just gazetted, last voyage but two, when they had the yellow Jack awfully bad up at cantonments. He was in a deadly funk of the fever all the way, and always asking everybody questions

about it. The moment he landed, who does he go and meet but an old Irish friend of the family, who was going home by the return steamer. The Irishman rushes up to him and shakes his hand violently, and says he—"Me dear fellow," says he, "ye've come in the very nick of time. Promotion's certain; they're dying by thousands. Every day wan of 'em drops off the list; and all ye've got to do is to hould yer head up, keep from drinking any brandy, and don't be frightened; and, be George, ye'll rise in no time as fast as I have; and I'm going home this morning a colonel."'

The General shuddered slightly. 'Not a pleasant introduction to the country certainly,' he answered in his driest manner. 'But I suppose Trinidad's fairly healthy at present?'

'Healthy! Well, yes, well enough as the tropics go, General.—But don't you be afraid of your young people. With health and strength, they'll pull through decently, not a doubt of it.—Let me see—let me see; I must secure 'em a place at my own table. We've got rather an odd lot of passengers this time, mostly; a good many of 'em have got a very decided touch o' the tar-brush about 'em—a touch o' the tar-brush. There's that woolly-headed nigger fellow over there who's just come aboard; he's going to Trinidad too; he's a doctor, he is. We mustn't let your people get mixed up with all that lot, of course; I'll keep 'em a place nice and snug at my own table.'

'Thank you,' the General said, rather more graciously than before.—'This is my daughter, Captain, Mrs. Hawthorn. And this is my son-

in-law, Mr. Edward Hawthorn, who's going out to accept a district judgeship over yonder in Trinidad.'

'Ha!' the jovial captain answered in his bluff voice, doffing his hat sailor-fashion to Marian and Edward. 'Going to hang up the niggers out in Trinidad, are you, sir? Going to hang up the niggers! Well, well, they deserve it all, every man Jack of 'em, the lazy beggars; they all deserve hanging. A pestering set of idle, thieving, hulking vagabonds, as ever came around to coal a ship in harbour! I'd judge 'em, I would—I'd judge 'em.' And the captain pantomimically expressed the exact nature of his judicial sentiments by pressing his own stout bull-neck, just across the windpipe, with his sturdy right hand, till his red and sunburnt face grew even redder and redder with the suggested suspension.

Edward smiled quietly, but answered nothing.

'Well, sir,' the captain went on as soon as he had recovered fully from the temporary effects of his self-inflicted strangulation, 'and have you ever been in the West Indies before, or is this your first visit?'

'I was born there,' Edward answered. 'I'm a Trinidad man by birth; but I've lived so long in England, and went there so young, that I don't really recollect very much about my native country.

'Mr. Hawthorn's father you may know by name,' the General said, a little assertively. 'He's a son of the Honourable James Hawthorn, of Agualta Estate, Trinidad.'

The captain drew back for a moment with a curious look, and scanned Edward closely from head to foot with a remarkably frank

and maritime scrutiny; then he whistled low to himself for a few seconds, and seemed to be ruminating inwardly upon some very amusing and unusual circumstance. At last he answered slowly, in a more reserved and somewhat embarrassed tone: 'Oh, yes, I know Mr. Hawthorn of Agualta—know him personally; well-known man, Mr. Hawthorn of Agualta. Member of the Legislative Council of the island. Fine estate, Agualta—very fine estate indeed, and has one of the largest out-puts of rum and sugar anywhere in the whole West Indies.'

'I told you so,' Harry Noel murmured parenthetically. 'The governor is coiny. They're all alike, the whole breed of them. Secretiveness large, acquisitiveness enormous, benevolence and generosity absolutely undeveloped. When you get to Trinidad, my dear Teddy, bleed him, bleed him!'

'Well, well, Mrs. Hawthorn,' the captain said gallantly to Marian, who stood by rather wondering what his sudden change of demeanour could possibly portend, 'you shall have a seat at my table—certainly, certainly; you shall have a seat at my table. The General's an old passenger of mine on the P. and O.; and I've known Mr. Hawthorn of Agualta Estate ever since I first came upon the West India liners.—And the young lady, is she going too?' For Captain Burford, like most others of his craft, had a quick eye for pretty faces, and he had not been long in picking out and noticing Nora's.

'This is Miss Dupuy, of Orange Grove,' Marian said, drawing her young companion a little forward. 'Perhaps you know her father too, as you've been going so long to the island.'

'What! a daughter of Mr. Theodore Dupuy, of Orange Grove and Pimento Valley,' the captain replied briskly. 'Mr. Theodore Dupuy's daughter! Lord bless my soul, Mr. Theodore Dupuy! Oh, yes, don't I just know him! Why, Mr. Dupuy's one of the most respected and well-known gentlemen in the whole island. Been settled at Orange Grove, the Dupuys have, ever since the old Spanish occupation.—And so you're taking out Mr. Theodore Dupuy's daughter, are you, Mrs Hawthorn? Well, well! Taking out Mr. Theodore Dupuy's daughter. That's a capital joke, that is.—Oh, yes, you must all sit at the head of my table, ladies; and I'll do everything that lies in my power to make you comfortable.'

Meanwhile, Edward and Harry Noel had strolled off for a minute towards the opposite

end of the deck, where the mulatto gentleman was standing quite alone, looking down steadily into the deep-blue motionless water. As the captain moved away, Nora Dupuy gave a little start, and caught Marian Hawthorn's arm excitedly and suddenly. 'Look there!' she cried—'Oh, look there, Marian! Do you see Mr. Hawthorn? Do you see what he's doing? That brown man over there, with the name on the portmanteau, has turned round and spoken to him, and Mr. Hawthorn's actually held out his hand and is shaking hands with him!'

'Well,' Marian answered in some surprise, 'I see he is. Why not?'

'Why not? My dear, how can you ask me such a question! Why, of course, because the man's a regular mulatto—a coloured person.'

Marian laughed. 'Really, dear,' she answered, more amused than angry, 'you mustn't be so entirely filled up with your foolish little West Indian prejudices. The young man's a doctor, and no doubt a gentleman in education and breeding, and I can't for my part for the life of me see why one shouldn't shake hands with him as well as with any other respectable person.'

'Oh, but Marian, you know—a brown man!—his father and mother!—the associations—no, really!'

Marian smiled again. 'They're coming this way,' she said; 'we shall soon hear what they're talking about. Perhaps he knows something about your people, or Edward's.'

Nora looked up quite defiant. 'About my people, Marian!' she said almost angrily. 'Why, what can you be thinking of! You

don't suppose, do you, that *my* people are in the habit of mixing casually with woolly-headed mulattoes?'

She had hardly uttered the harsh words, when the mulatto gentleman walked over towards them side by side with Edward Hawthorn, and lifted his hat courteously to Marian.

'My wife,' Edward said, as Marian bowed slightly in return: 'Dr. Whitaker.'

'I saw your husband's name upon his boxes, Mrs. Hawthorn,' the mulatto gentleman said with a pleasant smile, and in a soft, clear, cultivated voice; 'and as my father has the privilege of knowing Mr. Hawthorn of Agualta, over in Trinidad, I took the liberty of introducing myself at once to him. I'm glad to hear that we're to be fellow-passengers together, and that your husband has

really decided to return at last to his native island.'

'Thank you,' Marian answered simply. 'We're all looking forward much to our life in Trinidad.' Then, with a little mischievous twinkle in her eye, she turned to Nora. 'This is another of our fellow-passengers, Dr. Whitaker,' she said demurely—'my friend, Miss Dupuy, whom I'm taking out under my charge—another Trinidadian: you ought to know one another. Miss Dupuy's father lives at an estate called Orange Grove—isn't it, Nora?'

The mulatto doctor lifted his hat again, and bowed with marked politeness to the blushing white girl. For a second, their eyes met. Dr. Whitaker's looked at the beautiful half-childish face with unmistakable instantaneous admiration. Nora's flashed

a little angrily, and her nostrils dilated with a proud quiver; but she said never a word; she merely gave a chilly bow, and didn't attempt even to offer her pretty little gloved hand to the brown stranger.

'I have heard of Miss Dupuy's family by name,' the mulatto answered, speaking to Marian, but looking askance at the same time toward the petulant Nora. 'Mr. Dupuy of Orange Grove is well known throughout the island. I'm glad that we're going to have so much delightful Trinidad society on our outward passage.'

'Thank him for nothing,' Nora murmured aside to Harry Noel, moving away as she spoke towards Mrs. Ord at the other end of the vessel. 'What impertinence! Marian ought to have known better than to introduce me to him.'

'It's a pity you don't like the coloured gentleman,' Harry Noel put in provokingly. 'The appreciation is unfortunately not mutual, it seems. He appeared to me to be very much struck with you at first sight, Miss Dupuy, to judge by his manner.'

Nora turned towards him with a sudden fierceness and haughtiness that fairly surprised the easy-going young barrister. 'Mr. Noel,' she said in a tone of angry but suppressed indignation, 'how dare you speak to me so about that negro fellow, sir—how dare you? How dare you mention him and me in the same breath together? How dare you presume to joke with me on such a subject? Don't speak to me again, pray. You don't know what we West Indians are, or you'd never have ventured to utter such a speech as that to any woman with a single

drop of West Indian blood in her whole body.'

Harry bowed silently and bit his lip; then, without another word, he moved back slowly toward the other group, and allowed Nora to join Mrs. Ord by the door of the companion-ladder.

In twenty minutes more, the first warning bell rang for those who were going ashore to get ready for their departure. There was the usual hurried leave-taking on every side; there was the usual amount of shedding of tears; there was the usual shouting, and bawling, and snorting, and puffing; and there was the usual calm indifference of the ship's officers, moving up and down through all the tearful valedictory groups, as through an ordinary incident of humanity, experienced regularly every six weeks of a whole

lifetime. As Marian and her mother were taking their last farewells, Harry Noel ventured once more timidly to approach Nora Dupuy, and address a few parting words to her in a low undertone.

'I'm sorry I offended you unintentionally just now, Miss Dupuy,' he said quietly. 'I thought the best apology I could offer at the moment was to say nothing just then in exculpation. But I really didn't mean to hurt your feelings, and I hope we still part friends.'

Nora held out her small hand to him a trifle reluctantly. 'As you have the grace to apologise,' she said, 'I shall overlook it. Yes, we part friends, Mr. Noel; I have no reason to part otherwise.'

'Then there's no chance for me?' Harry

asked in a low tone, looking straight into her eyes with a searching glance.

'No chance,' Nora echoed, dropping her eyes suddenly, but speaking very decidedly. 'You must go now, Mr. Noel; the second bell's ringing.'

Harry took her hand once more, and pressed it faintly. 'Good-bye, Miss Dupuy,' he said—'good-bye—for the present. I dare say we shall meet again before long, some day—in Trinidad.'

'Oh, no!' Nora cried in a low voice, as he turned to leave her. 'Don't do that, Mr. Noel; don't come out to Trinidad. I told you it'd be quite useless.'

Harry laughed one of his most teasing laughs. 'My father has property in the West Indies, Miss Dupuy,' he answered in his usual voice of light badinage, paying her out

in her own coin; 'and I shall probably come over some day to see how the niggers are getting on upon it—that was all I meant. Good-bye—good-bye to you.'

But his eyes belied what he said, and Nora knew they did as she saw him look back a last farewell from the deck of the retreating little tender.

'Any more for the shore—any more for the shore?' cried the big sailor who rang the bell. 'No more.—Then shove off, cap'n'—to the skipper of the tug-boat.

In another minute the great anchor was heaved, and the big screw began to revolve slowly through the sluggish water. Next moment, the ship moved from her moorings and was fairly under weigh. Just as she moved, a boat with a telegraph-boy on board rowed up rapidly to her side, and a voice

from the boat shouted aloud in a sailor's bass: '*Severn*, ahoy!'

'Ahoy!' answered the ship's officer.

'Passenger aboard by the name of Hawthorn? We've got a telegram for him.'

Edward rushed quickly to the ship's side, and answered in his loudest voice: 'Yes. Here I am.'

'Passenger aboard by the name of Miss Dupuy? We've got a telegram for her.'

'This is she,' Edward answered. 'How can we get them?'

'Lower a bucket,' the ship's officer shouted to a sailor.—'You can put 'em in that, boy, can't you?'

The men in the boat caught the bucket, and fastened in the letters rudely with a stone taken from the ballast at the bottom. The screw still continued to revolve as the

sailors drew up the bucket hastily. A little water got over the side and wet the telegrams; but they were both still perfectly legible. Edward unfolded his in wondering silence, while Marian looked tremulously over his right shoulder. It contained just these few short words:

'*From* HAWTHORN, *Trinidad*, to HAWTHORN, R.M.S. *Severn*, *Southampton*.—For God's sake, don't come out. Reasons by letter.'

Marian gazed at it for a moment in speechless surprise; then she turned, pale and white, to her husband beside her. 'Oh, Edward,' she cried, looking up at him with a face of terror, 'what on earth can it mean? What on earth can they wish us not to come out for?'

Edward held the telegram open before his eyes, gazing at it blankly in inexpressible astonishment. 'My darling,' he said, 'my

own darling, I haven't the very remotest notion. I can't imagine why on earth they should ever wish to keep us away from them.'

At the same moment, Nora held her own telegram out to Marian with a little laugh of surprise and amusement. Marian glanced at it and read it hastily. It ran as follows:

'*From* DUPUY, *Trinidad*, to MISS DUPUY, R.M.S. *Severn*, *Southampton*.—Don't come out till next steamer. On no account go on board the *Severn*.'

CHAPTER VIII.

For a few minutes they stood looking blankly at one another in mute astonishment, turning over and comparing the two telegrams together with undecided minds; then at last Nora broke the silence. 'I tell you what it is,' she said, with an air of profound wisdom; 'they must have got an epidemic of yellow fever in Trinidad—they're always having it, you know, and nobody minds it, unless of course they die of it, and even then I dare say they don't think much about it. But papa and Mr. Hawthorn must be afraid that if we come out now, fresh from England, we may all of us get it.'

Edward looked once more at the telegrams very dubiously. 'I don't think that'll do, Miss Dupuy,' he said, after re-reading them with a legal scrutiny. 'You see, your father says: "On no account go on board the *Severn*." Evidently, it's this particular ship he has an objection to; and perhaps my father's objection may be exactly the same. It's very singular—very mysterious!'

'Do you think,' Marian suggested, 'there can be anything wrong with the vessel or the machinery? You know, they *do* say, Edward, that some ship-owners send ships to sea that aren't at all safe or seaworthy. I read such a dreadful article about it a little while ago in one of the papers. Perhaps they think the *Severn* may go to the bottom.'

'Or else that there's dynamite on board,'

Nora put in; 'or a clockwork thing like the one somebody was going to blow up that steamer with at Hamburg, once, you remember! Oh, my dear, the bare idea of it makes me quite shudder! Fancy being blown out of your berth, at dead of night, into the nasty cold stormy water, and having a shark bite you in two across the waist before you were really well awake, and had begun properly to realise the situation!'

'Not very likely, either of them,' Edward said. 'This is a new ship, one of the very best on the line, and perfectly safe, except of course in a hurricane, when anything on earth is liable to go down; so that can't possibly be Mr. Dupuy's objection to the *Severn*.—And as to the clockwork, you know, Nora, the people who put those things on board steamers, if there are any, don't telegraph out to give

warning beforehand to the friends of passengers on the other side of the Atlantic. No; for my part, I can't at all understand it. It's a perfect mystery to me, and I give it up entirely.'

'Well, what do you mean to do, dear?' Marian asked anxiously. 'Go back at once, or go on in spite of it?'

'I don't think there's any choice left us now, darling. The ship's fairly under weigh, you see; and nothing on earth would induce them to stop her, once she's started, till we get to Trinidad, or at least to St. Thomas.'

'You don't mean to say, Mr. Hawthorn,' Nora cried piteously, 'they'll carry us on now to the end of the journey, whether we want to stop or whether we don't?'

'Yes, I do, Miss Dupuy. They will, most certainly. I suspect they've got no voice

themselves in the matter. A mail-steamer is under contract to sail from a given port on a given day, and not to stop for anything on earth, except fire or stress of weather, till she lands the mails safely on the other side, according to agreement.'

'Well, that's a blessing anyhow!' Nora said resignedly; 'because, if so, it saves us the trouble of thinking anything more about the matter; and papa can't be angry with me for having sailed, if the captain refuses to send us back, now we've once fairly started. Indeed, for my part, I'm very glad of it, to tell you the truth, because it would have been such a horrid nuisance to have to go on shore again and unpack all one's things just for a fortnight, after all the fuss and hurry we've had already about getting them finished. What a pity the bothering old tele

grams came at all to keep us in suspense the whole way over!'

'But suppose there *is* some dynamite on board,' Marian suggested timidly. 'Don't you think, Edward, you'd better go and ask the captain?'

'I'll go and ask the captain, by all means, if that's any relief to you,' Edward answered; 'but I don't think it likely he can throw any particular light of his own upon the reason of the telegrams.'

The captain, being shortly found on the bridge, came down at his leisure and inspected the messages; hummed and hawed a little dubiously; smiled to himself with much good-humour; said it was a confoundedly odd coincidence; and looked somehow as though he saw the meaning of the two telegrams at once, but wasn't anxious to impart

his knowledge to any inquiring third party. 'Yellow fever!' he said, shrugging his shoulders sailor-wise, when Edward mentioned Nora's first suggestion. 'No, no; don't you believe it. 'Tain't yellow fever. Why, nobody who lives in the West Indies ever thinks anything of that, bless you. Besides, *you* wouldn't get it; don't you trouble your head about it. You ain't the sort or the build to get it. Men of your temperament never do ketch yellow fever—it don't affect 'em. No, no; it ain't that, you take my word for it.'

Marian gently hinted at unseaworthiness; but at this the good captain laughed her quite unceremoniously in the face. 'Go down!' he cried—'go down, indeed! I'd like to see the hurricane that'd send the *Severn* spinning to the bottom. No, no; we

may get hurricanes, of course—though this isn't the month for them. The rhyme says: "June—too soon; July—stand by; Au-gust, you must; September—remember; October —all over." Still, in the course of nature we're likely enough to have some ugly weather—a capful of wind or so, I mean—nothing to speak of, for a ship of her tonnage. But I'll bet you a bottle of champagne the hurricane's not alive that'll ever send the *Severn* to the bottom, and I'll pay it you (if I lose) at the first port the lifeboat puts into after the accident. — Dynamite! clockwork! that's all gammon, my dear ma'am, that is! The ship's as good a ship as ever sailed the Bay o' Biscay, and there's nothing aboard her more explosive than the bottle of champagne I hope you'll drink this evening for dinner.'

'Then we can't be put out?' Nora asked, with her most beseeching smile.

'My dear lady, not if I knew you were the Queen of England. Once we're off, we're off in earnest, and nothing on earth can ever stop us till we get safely across to St. Thomas —the hand of God, the perils of the sea, and the Queen's enemies alone excepted,' the captain added, quoting with a smile the stereotyped formula of the bills of lading.

'What do you think the telegram means, then?' Nora asked again, a little relieved by this confident assurance.

The captain once more hummed and hawed, and bit his nails, and looked very awkward. 'Well,' he said slowly, after a minute's internal debate, 'perhaps—perhaps the niggers over yonder may be getting troublesome, you know; and your family may

think it an inopportune time for you or Mr. and Mrs. Hawthorn to visit the colony.—All right, Jones, I'm coming in a minute.—You must excuse me, ladies. In sight of land, a cap'n ought always to be at his post on the bridge. See you at dinner.—Good-morning, good-morning.'

'It seems to me, Edward,' Marian said, as he retreated opportunely, 'the captain knows a good deal more about it than he wants to tell us. He was trying to hide something from us; I'm quite sure he was.—Aren't you, Nora? I do hope there's nothing wrong with the steamer or the machinery!'

'I didn't notice anything peculiar about him myself,' Edward answered, with a little hesitation. 'However, it's certainly very singular. But as we've got to go on, we may as well go on as confidently as possible, and

think as little as we can about it. The mystery will all be cleared up as soon as we get across to Trinidad.'

'If we ever get there!' Nora said, half-jesting and half in earnest.

As she spoke, Dr. Whitaker the mulatto passed close by, pacing up and down the quarter-deck for exercise, to get his sea-legs; and as he passed her, he turned his eyes once more mutely upon her with that rapid, timid, quickly shifting glance, the exact opposite of a stare, which yet speaks more certainly than anything else can do an instinctive admiration. Nora's face flushed again, at least as much with annoyance as with self-consciousness. 'That horrid man!' she cried petulantly, with a little angry dash of her hand, almost before he was well out of earshot. 'How on earth can he have the impertinence

to go and look at me in that way, I wonder!'

'Oh, don't, dear!' Marian whispered, genuinely alarmed lest the mulatto should overhear her. 'You oughtn't to speak like that, you know. Of course one feels at once a sort of natural shrinking from black people —one can't help that, I know—it seems to be innate in one. But one oughtn't to let them see it themselves, at any rate. Respect their feelings, Nora; do, dear, for my sake, I beg of you.'

'Oh, it's all very well for you, Marian,' Nora answered, quite aloud, and strumming on the deck with her parasol; 'but for my part, you know, if there's anything on earth that I can't endure, it's a brown man.'

CHAPTER IX

All the way across to St. Thomas, endless speculations as to the meaning of the two mysterious telegrams afforded the three passengers chiefly concerned an unusual fund of conversation and plot-interest for an entire voyage. Still, after a while the subject palled a little ; and on the second evening out, in calm and beautiful summer twilight weather, they were all sitting in their own folding-chairs on the after-deck, positively free from any doubts or guesses upon the important question, and solely engaged in making the acquaintance of their fellow-passengers By-and-by, as the

shades began to close in, there was a little sound of persuasive language—as when one asks a young lady to sing—at the stern end of the swiftly moving vessel; and then, in a few minutes, somebody in the dusk took a small violin out of a wooden case and began to play a piece of Spohr's. The ladies turned around their chairs to face the musician, and listened carelessly as he went through the preliminary scraping and twanging which seems to be inseparable from the very nature of the violin as an instrument. Presently, having tightened the pegs to his own perfect satisfaction, the player began to draw his bow rapidly and surely across the strings with the unerring confidence of a practised performer. In two minutes, the hum of conversation had ceased on deck, and all the world of the *Severn* was bending forward its head eagerly to catch the

liquid notes that floated with such delicious clearness upon the quiet breathless evening air. Instinctively everybody recognised at once the obvious fact that the man in the stern to whom they were all listening was an accomplished and admirable violin-player.

Just at first, the thing that Marian and Nora noticed most in the stranger's playing was his extraordinary brilliancy and certainty of execution. He was a perfect master of the *technique* of his instrument, that was evident. But after a few minutes more, they began to perceive that he was something much more than merely that; he played not only with consummate skill, but also with infinite grace, insight, and tenderness. As they listened, they could feel the man outpouring his whole soul in the exquisite modulations of his passionate music: it was not any cold,

well-drilled, mechanical accuracy of touch alone; it was the loving hand of a born musician, wholly in harmony with the master he interpreted, the work he realised, and the strings on which he gave it vocal utterance. As he finished the piece, Edward whispered in a hushed voice to Nora: 'He plays beautifully.' And Nora answered with a sudden burst of womanly enthusiasm: 'More than beautifully—exquisitely, divinely.'

'You'll sing us something, won't you?'—'Oh, do sing us something!'—'Monsieur will not refuse us!'—'Ah, señor, it is such a great pleasure.' So a little babel of two or three languages urged at once upon the unknown figure silhouetted dark at the stern of the steamer against the paling sunset; and after a short pause, the unknown figure complied graciously, bowing its acknowledgments to

the surrounding company, and burst out into a song in a glorious rich tenor voice, almost the finest Nora and Marian had ever listened to.

'English!' Nora whispered in a soft tone, as the first words fell upon their ears distinctly, uttered without any mouthing in a plain unmistakable native tone. 'I'm quite surprised at it! I made up my mind, from the intense sort of way he played the violin, that he must be a Spaniard or an Italian, or at least a South American. English people seldom play with all that depth and earnestness and fervour.'

'Hush, hush!' Marian answered under her breath. 'Don't talk while he's singing, please, Nora—it's too delicious.'

They listened till the song was quite finished, and the last echo of that magnificent voice had died away upon the surface of the still, moonlit waters; and then Nora said

eagerly to Edward : 'Oh, do find out who he is, Mr. Hawthorn! Do go and get to know him! I want to be introduced to him! What a glorious singer! and what a splendid violinist! I never in my life heard anything lovelier, even at the opera.'

Edward smiled, and dived at once into the little crowd at the end of the quarter-deck, in search of the unknown and nameless musician. Nora waited impatiently in her seat to see who the mysterious personage could be. In a few seconds, Edward came back again, bringing with him the admired performer. 'Miss Dupuy was so very anxious to make your acquaintance,' he said, as he drew the supposed stranger forward, 'on the strength of your beautiful playing and singing.—You see, Miss Dupuy, it's a fellow passenger to whom we've already introduced ourselves—Dr. Whitaker.'

Nora drew back almost imperceptibly at this sudden revelation. In the dusk and from a little distance, she had not recognised their acquaintance of yesterday. But it was indeed the mulatto doctor. However, now she was fairly trapped; and having thus let herself in for the young man's society for that particular evening, she had good sense and good feeling enough not to let him see, at least too obtrusively, that she did not desire the pleasure of his further acquaintance To be sure, she spoke as little and as coldly as she could to him, in such ordinary phrases of polite admiration as she felt were called for under these painful circumstances; but she tried to temper her enthusiasm down to the proper point of chilliness for a clever and well taught mulatto fiddler. (He had been a 'marvellous violinist' in her own mind

five minutes before; but as he turned out to be of brown blood, she felt now that 'clever fiddler' was quite good enough for the altered occasion.)

Dr. Whitaker, however, remained in happy unconsciousness of Nora's sudden change of attitude. He drew over a camp-stool from near the gunwale, and seated himself upon it just in front of the little group in their folding ship-chairs. 'I'm so glad you like my playing, Miss Dupuy,' he said quietly, turning towards Nora. 'Music always sounds at its best on the water in the evening. And that's such a lovely piece—my pet piece—so much feeling and pathos and delicate melody in it. Not like most of Spohr: a very unusual work for him; he's so often wanting, you know, in the sense of melody.

'You play charmingly,' Nora answered, in

a languid chilly voice. 'Your song and your playing have given us a great treat, I'm sure, Dr. Whitaker.'

'Where have you studied?' Marian asked hastily, feeling that Nora wasn't showing so deep an interest in the subject as was naturally expected of her. 'Have you taken lessons in Germany or Italy?'

'A few,' the mulatto doctor replied with a little sigh, 'though not so many as I could have wished. My great ambition would have been to study regularly at the Conservatoire. But I never could gratify my wish in that respect, and I learned most of my fiddling by myself at Edinburgh.'

'You're an Edinburgh University man, I suppose?' Edward put in.

'Yes, an Edinburgh University man. The medical course there, you know, attracts

so many men who would like better, in other respects, to go to one of the English universities.—You're Cambridge yourself, I think, Mr. Hawthorn, aren't you?'

'Yes, Cambridge.'

The mulatto sighed again. 'A lovely place!' he said—'a most delicious place, Cambridge. I spent a charming week there once myself. The calm repose of those grand old avenues behind John's and Trinity charmed me immensely.—A place to sit in and compose symphonies, Mrs. Hawthorn. Nothing that I've seen in England so greatly impressed me with the idea of the grand antiquity of the country—the vast historical background of civilisation, century behind century, and generation behind generation—as that beautiful mingled picture of venerable elms, and mouldering architecture, and close-

cropped greensward at the backs of the colleges. The very grass had a wonderful look of antique culture. I asked the gardener in one of the courts of Trinity how they ever got such velvety carpets for their smooth quadrangles, and the answer the fellow gave me was itself redolent of the traditions of the place. "We rolls 'em and mows 'em, sir," he said, "and we mows 'em and rolls 'em, for a thousand years."'

'What a pity you couldn't have stopped there and composed symphonies, as you liked it so much,' Nora remarked, with hardly concealed sarcasm—'only then, of course, we shouldn't have had the pleasure of hearing you play your violin so beautifully on the *Severn* this evening.'

Dr. Whitaker looked up at her quickly with a piercing look. 'Yes,' he replied; 'it

is a pity, for I should have dearly loved it. I'm bound up in music, almost; it's one of my two great passions. But I had more than one reason for feeling that I ought, if possible, to go back to Trinidad. The first is, that I think every West Indian, and especially every man of my colour'—he said it quite naturally, simply, and unaffectedly, without pausing or hesitating—'who has been to Europe for his education, owes it to his country to come back again, and do his best in raising its social, intellectual, and artistic level.'

'I'm very glad to hear you say so,' Edward replied. 'I think so myself, too, and I'm pleased to find you agree with me in the matter.—And your second reason?'

'Well, I thought my colour might stand in my way in practice in England—very

naturally, I'm not surprised at it; while in Trinidad I might be able to do a great deal of good and find a great many patients amongst my own people.'

'But I'm afraid they won't be able to pay you, you know,' Nora interposed. 'The poor black people always expect to be doctored for nothing.'

Dr. Whitaker turned upon her a puzzled pair of simple, honest, open eyes, whose curious glance of mute inquiry could be easily observed even in the dim moonlight. 'I don't think of practising for money,' he said simply, as if it were the most ordinary statement in the world. 'My father has happily means enough to enable me to live without the necessity for earning a livelihood. I want to be of some use in my generation, and to help my own people, if possible, to

rise a little in the scale of humanity. I shall practise gratuitously among the poorest negroes, and do what I can to raise and better their unhappy condition.'

For a second, nobody answered a word; this quiet declaration of an honest self-sacrifice took them all, even Nora, so utterly by surprise. Then Edward murmured musingly: 'And it was for this that you gave up the prospect of living at Cambridge, and composing symphonies in Trinity gardens!'

The mulatto smiled a deprecating smile. 'Oh,' he cried timidly, 'you mustn't say that. I didn't want to make out I was going to do anything so very grand or so very heroic. Of course, a man *must* satisfy himself he's doing something to justify his existence in the world; and much as I love music, I hardly feel as though playing the violin were

in itself a sufficient end for a man to live for. Though I must confess I should very much like to stop in England and be a composer. I've composed one or two little pieces already for the violin, that have been played with some success at public concerts. Sarasate played a small thing of mine last winter at a festival in Vienna. But then, besides, my father and friends live in Trinidad, and I feel that that's the place where my work in life is really cut out for me.'

'And your second great passion?' Marian inquired. 'You said you had a second great passion. What is it, I wonder?—Oh, of course, I see—your profession.'

('How could she be so stupid!' Nora thought to herself. 'What a silly girl! I'm afraid of my life now, the wretched man'll try to say something pretty.')

'Oh, no; not my profession,' Dr. Whitaker answered smiling. 'It's a noble profession, of course—the noblest and grandest, almost, of all the professions—assuaging and alleviating human suffering; but one looks upon it, for all that, rather as a duty than as a passion. Besides, there's one thing greater even than the alleviation of human suffering, greater than art with all its allurements, greater than anything else that a man can interest himself in—though I know most people don't think so—and that's science—the knowledge of our relations with the universe, and still more of the universe's relations with its various parts.—No, Mrs. Hawthorn; my second absorbing passion, next to music, and higher than music, is one that I'm sure ladies won't sympathise with—it's only botany.'

'Goodness gracious!' Nora cried, surprised into speech. 'I thought botany was nothing but the most dreadfully hard words, all about nothing on earth that anybody cared for!'

The mulatto looked at her open-eyed with a sort of mild astonishment. 'What?' he said. 'All the glorious lilies and cactuses and palms and orchids of our beautiful Trinidad nothing but hard words that nobody cares for! All the slender lianas that trail and droop from the huge buttresses of the wild cotton trees; all the gorgeous trumpet-creepers that drape the gnarled branches of the mountain star-apples with their scarlet blossoms; all the huge cecropias, that rise aloft with their silvery stems and fan-shaped leaves, towering into the air like gigantic candelabra; all the graceful tree-ferns and

feathery bamboos, and glossy-leaved magnolias and majestic bananas, and luxuriant ginger-worts and clustering arums; all the breadth and depth of tropical foliage, with the rugged and knotted creepers, festooned in veritable cables of vivid green, from branch to branch among the dim mysterious forest shades—stretched in tight cordage like the rigging yonder from mast to mast, for miles together—oh, Miss Dupuy, is that nothing? Do you call that nothing, for a man to fix his loving regard upon? Our own Trinidad is wonderfully rich still in such natural glories; and it's the hope of doing a little in my spare hours to explore and disentomb them, like hidden treasures, that partly urges me to go back again where manifest destiny calls me, to the land I was born in.'

The mulatto is always fluent, even when

uneducated; but Dr. Whitaker, learned in all the learning of the schools, and pouring forth his full heart enthusiastically on the subjects nearest and dearest to him, spoke with such a ready, easy eloquence—common enough, indeed, among south Europeans, and among Celtic Scots and Irish as well, but rare and almost unknown in our colder and more phlegmatic Anglo-Saxon constitutions—that Nora listened to him, quite taken aback by the flood of his native rhetoric, and whispered to herself in her own soul: 'Really, he talks very well after all—for a coloured person!'

'Yes, of course, all those things are very lovely, Dr. Whitaker,' Marian put in, more for the sake of drawing him out—for he was so interesting — than because she really wanted to disagree with him upon the subject. 'But then, that isn't botany. I always

thought botany was a mere matter of stamens and petals, and all sorts of other dreadful technicalities.'

'Stamens and petals!' the mulatto echoed half contemptuously—'stamens and petals! You might as well say art was all a matter of pigments and perspective, or music all a matter of crotchets and quavers, as botany all a matter of stamens and petals. Those are only the beggarly elements: the beautiful pictures, the glorious oratorios, the lovely flowers, are the real things to which in the end they all minister. It's the trees and the plants themselves that interest me, not the mere lifeless jargon of stamens and petals.'

They sat there late into the night, discussing things musical and West Indian and otherwise, without any desire to move away or cut short the conversation; and Dr.

Whitaker, his reserve now broken, talked on to them hour after hour, doing the lion's share of the conversation, and delighting them with his transparent easy talk and open-hearted simplicity. He was frankly egotistical, of course—all persons of African blood always are; but his egotism, such as it was, took the pleasing form of an enthusiasm about his own pet ideas and pursuits—a love of music, a love of flowers, a love of his profession, and a love of Trinidad. To these favourite notes he recurred fondly again and again, vigorously defending the violin as an exponent of human emotion against Edward's half-insincere expression of preference for wind instruments; going into raptures to Nora over the wonderful beauty of their common home; and describing to Marian in vivid language the grandeur of those mar-

vellous tropical forests whose strange loveliness she had never yet with her own eyes beheld.

'Picture to yourself,' he said, looking out vaguely beyond the ship on to the star-lit Atlantic, 'a great Gothic cathedral or Egyptian temple—Ely or Karnak wrought, not in freestone or marble, but in living trees —with huge cylindrical columns strengthened below by projecting buttresses, and supporting overhead, a hundred feet on high, an unbroken canopy of interlacing foliage. Dense — so dense that only an indistinct glimmer of the sky can be seen here and there through the great canopy, just as you see Orion's belt over yonder through the fringe of clouds upon the grey horizon; and even the intense tropical sunlight only reaches the ground at long intervals in little broken patches

of subdued paleness. Then there's the solemn silence, weird and gloomy, that produces in one an almost painful sense of the vast, the primeval, the mystical, the infinite. Only the low hum of the insects in the forest shade, the endless multitudinous whisper of the wind among the foliage, the faint sound begotten by the tropical growth itself, breaks the immemorial stillness in our West Indian woodland. It's a world in which man seems to be a noisy intruder, and where he stands awe-struck before the intense loveliness of nature, in the immediate presence of her unceasing forces.'

He stopped a moment, not for breath, for it seemed as if he could pour out language without an effort, in the profound enthusiasm of youth, but to take his violin once more tenderly from its case and hold it out, hesita-

ting, before him. 'Will you let me play you just one more little piece?' he asked apologetically. 'It's a piece of my own, into which I've tried to put some of the feelings about these tropical forests that I never could possibly express in words. I call it "Souvenirs des Lianes." Will you let me play it to you? I shan't be boring you? Thank you —thank you.'

He stood up before them in the pale light of that summer evening, tall and erect, violin on breast and bow in hand, and began pouring forth from his responsive instrument a slow flood of low, plaintive, mysterious music. It was not difficult to see what had inspired his brain and hand in that strangely weird and expressive piece. The profound shade and gloom of the forest, the great roof of overarching foliage, the flutter of the

endless leaves before the breeze, the confused murmur of the myriad wings and voices of the insects, nay, even the very stillness and silence itself of which he had spoken, all seemed to breathe forth deeply and solemnly on his quivering fiddle. It was a triumph of art over its own resources. On the organ or the flute, one would have said beforehand, such effects as these might indeed be obtained, but surely never, never on the violin. Yet in Dr. Whitaker's hand that scraping bow seemed capable of expressing even what he himself had called the sense of the vast, the primeval, and the infinite. They listened all in hushed silence, and scarcely so much as dared to breathe while the soft pensive cadences still floated out solemnly across the calm ocean. And when he had finished, they sat for a few minutes in perfect silence,

rendering the performer that instinctive homage of mute applause which is so far more really eloquent than any mere formal and conventional expression of thanks 'for your charming playing.'

As they sat so, each musing quietly over the various emotions aroused within them by the mulatto's forest echoes, one of the white gentlemen in the stern, a young English officer on his way out to join a West Indian regiment, came up suddenly behind them, clapped his hand familiarly on Edward's back, and said in a loud and cheerful tone: 'Come along, Hawthorn; we've had enough of this music now — thank you very much, Dr. Thingummy—let's all go down to the saloon, I say, and have a game of nap or a quiet rubber.'

Even Nora felt in her heart as though she

had suddenly been recalled by that untimely voice from some higher world to this vulgar, commonplace little planet of ours, the young officer had broken in so rudely on her silent reverie. She drew her dainty white lamb's-wool wrapper closer around her shoulders with a faint sigh, slipped her hand gently through Marian's arm, and moved away, slowly and thoughtfully, toward the companion-ladder. As she reached the doorway, she turned round, as if half ashamed of her own graciousness, and said in a low and genuine voice: 'Thank you, Dr. Whitaker—thank you very much indeed. We've so greatly enjoyed the treat you've given us.'

The mulatto bowed and said nothing; but instead of retiring to the saloon with the others, he put his violin case quietly under his arm, and walking alone to the stern of

the vessel, leant upon the gunwale long and mutely, looking over with all his eyes deep and far into the silent, heaving, moonlit water. The sound of Nora's voice thanking him reverberated long through all the echoing chambers of his memory.

CHAPTER X.

It is a truism nowadays, in this age of travelling, that you see a great deal more of people in a few weeks on board ship at sea together than you would see in a few years of that vacant calling and dining and attending crushes which we ordinarily speak of as society. Nora Dupuy and the two Hawthorns certainly saw a great deal more of Dr. Whitaker during their three weeks on board the *Severn* than they would ever have seen of him in three years of England or of Trinidad. Nora had had the young man's acquaintance thrust upon her by circumstances, to be sure;

but as the Hawthorns sat and talked a great deal with him, she was compelled to do so likewise, and she had too much good feeling to let him see very markedly her innate prejudice against his colour. Besides, she admitted even to herself that Dr. Whitaker, for a brown man, was really a very gentlemanly, well-informed person—quite an exceptional mulatto, in fact, and as such, to be admitted to the position of a gentleman by courtesy, much as Gulliver was excepted by the Houyhnhnms from the same category of utter reprobation as the ordinary Yahoos of their own country.

Most of the voyage was as decently calm as any one can reasonably expect from the North Atlantic. There were the usual episodes of flying-fish and Mother Carey's chickens, and the usual excitement of a daily

sweepstake on the length of the ship's run; but, on the whole, the only distinct landmarks of time for the entire three weeks between Southampton and St. Thomas were breakfast, luncheon, dinner, and bedtime. The North Atlantic, whatever novelists may say, is not a romantic stretch of ocean; and in spite of prepossessions to the contrary, a ship at sea is not at all a convenient place for the free exercise of the noble art of flirting. It lacks the needful opportunities for retirement from the full blaze of public observation to shy corners; it is far too exposed, and on the whole too unstable also. Altogether, the voyage was mostly a monotonous one, which is equivalent to saying that it was safe and comfortable; for the only possible break in the ordinary routine of a sea-passage must necessarily be a fire on board or a collision

with a rival steamer. However, about two days out from St. Thomas, there came a little relief from the tedium of the daily situation ; and the relief assumed the unpleasant form of a genuine West Indian hurricane.

Nora had never before seen anything like it ; or, at any rate, if she had, she had clean forgotten all about it. Though the captain had declared it was ' too soon ' for hurricanes, this was, in fact, a very fine tropical tornado of the very fiercest and yeastiest description. About two o'clock in the afternoon, the passengers were all sitting out on deck, when the sea, till then a dead calm, began to be faintly ruffled by little whiffs and spurts of wind, which raised here and there tiny patches of wavelets, scarcely perceptible to the blunt vision of the unaccustomed landsman. But the experienced eye of a sailor could read in

it at once a malignant hint of the coming tempest. Presently, the breeze freshened with extraordinary rapidity, and before five o'clock, the cyclone had burst upon them in all its violence. The rush of a mighty gale was heard through the rigging, swaying and bending the masts like sapling willows before the autumn breezes. The waves, lashed into fury by the fierce and fitful gusts of wind, broke ever and anon over the side of the vessel; and the big *Severn* tossed about helplessly before the frantic tempest like the veriest cockboat in an angry sea upon a northern ocean. Of course, at the first note of serious danger, the passengers were all ordered below to the saloon, where they sat in mute suspense, the women pale and trembling, the men trying to look as if they cared very little about it, while the great ship rolled

and tossed and pitched and creaked and rattled in all her groaning timbers beneath the mad frenzy of that terrific commotion.

Just as they were being turned off the decks to be penned up down-stairs like so many helpless sheep in the lower cabin, Nora Dupuy, who had been standing with the Hawthorns and Dr. Whitaker, watching the huge and ever-increasing waves bursting madly over the side of the vessel, happened to drop her shawl at starting on to the deck beside the companion-ladder. At that very moment, a bigger sea than any they had yet encountered broke with shivering force against the broadside of the steamer, and swept across the deck in a drowning flood as though it would carry everything bodily before it. 'Make haste, there!' the captain called out imperatively.—'Steward, send 'em

all down below, this minute. I shouldn't be surprised if before night we were to have a capful of nasty weather.'

But even as he spoke, the wave, which had caught Nora's shawl and driven it over to the leeward side, now in its reflux sucked it back again swiftly to windward, and left it lying all wet and matted against the gunwale in a mass of disorder. Dr. Whitaker jumped after it instinctively, and tried to catch it before another wave could carry it overboard altogether. 'Oh, pray, don't trouble about it,' Nora cried, in hasty deprecation. 'It isn't worth it. Take care, or you'll get wet through and through yourself before you know it!'

'The man's a fool,' the unceremonious captain called out bluntly from his perch above. 'Get wet indeed! If another sea

like that strikes the ship, it'll wash him clean overboard.—Come back, sir ; I tell you, come back ! No one but a sailor can keep his feet properly against the force of a sea like that one ! '

Nora and the few other passengers who had still remained on deck stood trembling under shelter of the glazed-in companion-ladder, wondering whether the rash mulatto would really carry out his foolhardy endeavour to recover the wrapper. The sailor stood by, ready to batten down the hatches as soon as the deck was fairly cleared, and waiting impatiently for the last lingerer. But Dr. Whitaker took not the slightest notice of captain or sailor, and merely glanced back at Nora with a quiet smile, as if to reassure her of his perfect safety. He stood by the gunwale, just clutching at the shawl, in the

very act of recovering it, when a second sea, still more violent than the last, struck the ship once more full on the side, and swept the mulatto helplessly before it right across the quarter-deck. It dashed him with terrific force against the bulwarks on the opposite side; and for a moment, Nora gave a scream of terror, imagining it would carry him overboard with its sudden flood. The next second, the ship righted itself, and they saw the young doctor rising to his feet once more, bruised and dripping, but still not seriously or visibly injured. The sea had washed the shawl once more out of his grasp, with the force of the shock; and instead of rushing back to the shelter of the ladder, he tried even now to recover it a second time from the windward side, where the recoil had again capriciously carried it. 'The shawl,

the shawl!' he cried excitedly, gliding once more across the wet and slippery decks as she lurched anew, in the foolish effort to catch the worthless wrapper.

'Confound the man!' the captain roared from his place on the bridge. 'Does he think the Company's going to lose a passenger's life for nothing, just to satisfy his infernal politeness!—Go down, sir—go down, this minute, I tell you; or else, by jingo, if you don't, I shall have you put in irons at once for the rest of the voyage.'

The mulatto looked up at him with a smile and nodded cheerfully. He held up his left hand proudly above his head, with the dripping shawl now waving in his grasp like a much bedraggled banner, while with his right he gripped a rope firmly and steadily, to hold his own against the next approaching

billow. In a second, the big sea was over him once more; and till the huge wall of water had swept its way across the entire breadth of the vessel, Nora and Marian couldn't discover whether it had dashed him bodily overboard or left him still standing by the windward gunwale. There was a pause of suspense while one might count twenty; and then, as the vessel rolled once more to port, Dr. Whitaker's tall figure could be seen, still erect and grasping the cable, with the shawl triumphantly flourished, even so, in his disengaged hand. The next instant, he was over at the ladder, and had placed the wet and soaking wrapper back in the hands of its original possessor.

'Dr. Whitaker,' Nora cried to him, half laughing and half pale with terror, 'I'm very angry with you. You had no right to imperil

your life like that for nothing better than a bit of a wrapper. It was awfully wrong of you; and I'll never wear the shawl again as long as I live, now that you've brought it back to me at the risk of drowning.'

The mulatto, smiling unconcernedly in spite of his wetting, bowed a little bow of quiet acquiescence. 'I'm glad to think, Miss Dupuy,' he replied in a low voice, 'that you regard my life as so well worth preserving.—But did you ever before in all your days see anything so glorious as those monstrous billows!'

Nora bit her lip tacitly, and answered nothing for a brief moment. Then she added merely: 'Thank you for your kindness,' in a constrained voice, and turned below into the crowded dining saloon. Dr. Whitaker did not rejoin them; he went back to his own

state-room, to put on some dry clothes after his foolhardy adventure, and think of Nora's eyes in the solitude of his cabin.

There is no position in life more helplessly feeble for grown-up men and women than that of people battened down in a ship at sea in the midst of a great and dangerous tempest. On deck, the captain and the officers, cut off from all communication with below, know how the storm is going and how the ship is weathering it ; but the unconscious passengers in their crowded quarters, treated like children by the rough seafaring men, can only sit below in hopeless ignorance, waiting to learn the fate in store for them when the tempest wills it. And indeed, the hurricane that night was quite enough to make even strong men feel their own utter and abject powerlessness. From the moment they were

all battened down in the big saloon, after the first fresh squall, the storm burst in upon them in real earnest with terrific and ever-increasing violence. The wind howled and whistled fiercely through the ropes and rigging. The ship bounced now on to the steep crest of a swelling billow; now wallowed helplessly in the deep trough that intervened between each and its mad successor. The sea seemed to dash in upon the side every second with redoubled intensity, sweeping through the scupper holes with a roar like thunder. The waves crashed down upon the battened skylights in blinding deluges. Every now and then they could hear the cracking of a big timber—some spar or boom torn off from the masts, like rotten branches from a dead tree, by the mighty force of the irresistible cyclone. Whirling and roaring

and sputtering and rattling and creaking, the storm raged on for hour after hour; and the pale and frightened women, sitting huddled together in little groups on the crimson velvet cushions of the stuffy saloon, looked at one another in silent awe, clasping each other's hands with bloodless fingers, by way of companionship in their mute terror. From time to time they could just overhear, in the lulls between the great gusts, the captain's loud voice shouting out inaudible directions to the sailors overhead; and the engineer's bell was rung over and over again, with bewildering frequency, to stop her, back her, ease her, steady her, or put her head once more bravely against the face of the ever-shifting and shattering storm.

Hour after hour went by slowly, and still

nobody stirred from the hushed saloon. At eleven all lights were usually put out, with Spartan severity; but this night, in consideration of the hurricane, the stewards left them burning still: they didn't know, they said, when they might be wanted for prayers, if the ship should begin to show signs of sudden foundering. So the passengers sat on still in the saloon together, till four o'clock began to bring back the daylight again with a lurid glare away to eastward. Then the first fury of the hurricane began to abate a little—a very little; and the seas crashed a trifle less frequently against the thick and solid plate-glass of the sealed skylights. Edward at last persuaded Marian and Nora to go down to their staterooms and try to snatch a short spell of sleep. The danger was over now, he said, and they might

fairly venture to recover a bit from the long terror of that awful night.

As they went staggering feebly along the unsteady corridors below, lighted by the dim lamps as yet unextinguished, they happened to pass the door of a state-room whence, to their great surprise, in the midst of that terrible awe-inspiring hurricane, the notes of a violin could be distinctly heard, mingling strangely in a weird harmony with the groaning of the wind and the ominous creaking of the overstrained and rumbling timbers. The sounds were not those of a regular piece of studied music; they were mere fitful bars and stray snatches of tempestuous melody, that imitated and registered the inarticulate music of the whirlwind itself even as it passed wildly before them. Nora paused a moment beside the half-open door.

'Why,' she whispered to Marian in an awe-struck undertone, clutching convulsively at the hand-rail to steady herself, 'it must be Dr. Whitaker. He's actually playing his violin to himself in the midst of all this awful uproar!'

'It is,' Edward Hawthorn answered confidently. 'I know his state-room—that's the number.'

He pushed the half-open door a little farther ajar, and peeped inside with sudden curiosity. There on the bunk sat the mulatto doctor, unmoved amid the awful horse-play of the careering elements, with his violin in his hands, and a little piece of blank paper ruled with pencilled music-lines pinned up roughly against the wall of the cabin beside him. He started and laughed a little at the sudden apparition of Edward Hawthorn's

head within the doorway. 'Ah,' he said, pointing to a few scratchy pencil-marks on the little piece of ruled paper, 'you see, Mr. Hawthorn, I couldn't sleep, and so I've been amusing myself with a fit of composing. I'm catching some fresh ideas for a piece from the tearing wind and the hubbub of the breakers. Isn't it grand, the music of the storm! I shall work it up by-and-by, no doubt, into a little hurricane symphony.—Listen, here—listen.' And he drew his bow rapidly across the strings with skilful fingers, and brought forth from the violin some few bars of a strangely wild and storm-like melody, that seemed to have caught the very spirit of the terrible tornado still raging everywhere so madly around them.

'Has the man no feelings,' Nora exclaimed with a shudder to Marian, outside, 'that he

can play his fiddle in this storm, like Nero or somebody when Rome was burning!'

'I think,' Marian said, with a little sigh, 'he has some stronger overpowering feeling underneath, that makes him think nothing of the hurricane or anything else, but keeps him wrapped up entirely in its own circle.'

Next day, when the sea had gone down somewhat, and the passengers had begun to struggle up on deck one by one with pallid faces, Dr. Whitaker made his appearance once more, clothed and in his right mind, and handed Nora a little roll of manuscript music. Nora took it and glanced carelessly at the first page. She started when she saw it was inscribed in a round and careful copper-plate hand—'To Miss Dupuy.—Hurricane Symphony. By W. Clarkson Whitaker, M.B.,

Mus. Bac.' Nora read hastily through the first few bars—the soughing and freshening of the wind in its earlier gusts, before the actual tempest had yet swept wildly over them—and murmured half aloud: 'It looks very pretty—very fine, I mean. I should like some day to hear you play it.'

'If you would permit me to prefix your name to the piece when it's published in London,' the mulatto doctor said with an anxious air—'just as I've prefixed it there at the head of the title-page—I should be very deeply obliged and grateful to you.'

Nora hesitated a moment. A brown man! Her name on the first page of his printed music! What would people say in Trinidad? And yet, what excuse could she give for answering no? She pretended for a while to be catching back her veil, that the wind

blew about her face and hair, to gain time for consideration; then she said with a smile of apology: 'It would look so conceited of me, you know—wouldn't it, Dr. Whitaker? as if I were setting myself up to be some great one, to whom people were expected to dedicate music.'

The mulatto's face fell a little with obvious disappointment; but he answered quietly; 'As you will, Miss Dupuy. It was somewhat presumptuous of me, perhaps, to think you would accept a dedication from me on so short an acquaintance.'

Nora's cheeks coloured quickly as she replied with a hasty voice; 'O no, Dr. Whitaker; I didn't mean that—indeed, I didn't. It's very kind of you to think of putting my name to your beautiful music. If you look at it that way, I shall ask you as a personal

favour to print that very dedication upon it when you get it published in London.'

Dr. Whitaker's eye lighted up with unexpected pleasure, and he answered, 'Thank you,' slowly and softly. But Nora said to herself in her own heart: 'Goodness gracious, now, just out of politeness to this clever brown man, and because I hadn't strength of mind to say *no* to him, I've gone and put my foot in it terribly. What on earth will papa say about it when he comes to hear of it! I must try and keep the piece away from him. That is the sort of thing that's sure to happen to one when one once begins knowing brown people!'

CHAPTER XI.

On the morning when the *Severn* was to reach Trinidad, everybody was up betimes and eagerly looking for the expected land. Nora and Marian went up on deck before breakfast, and there found Dr. Whitaker, opera-glass in hand, scanning the horizon for the first sight of his native island. 'I haven't seen it or my dear father,' he said to Marian, 'for nearly ten years, and I can't tell you how anxious I am once more to see him. I wonder whether he'll have altered much! But there —ten years is a long time. After ten years, one's pictures of home and friends begin to

get terribly indefinite. Still, I shall know him—I'm sure I shall know him. He'll be on the wharf to welcome us in, and I'm sure I shall recognise his dear old face again.'

'Your father's very well known in the island, the captain tells me,' Marian said, anxious to show some interest in what interested him so much. 'I believe he was very influential in helping to get slavery abolished.'

'He was,' the young doctor answered, kindling up afresh with his ever-ready enthusiasm—'he was; very influential. Mr. Wilberforce considered that my father, Robert Whitaker, was one of his most powerful coloured supporters in any of the colonies. I'm proud of my father, Mrs. Hawthorn—proud of the part he bore in the great revolution which freed my race. I'm proud to

think that I'm the son of such a man as Robert Whitaker.'

'Now, then, ladies,' the captain put in dryly, coming upon them suddenly from behind; 'breakfast's ready, and you won't sight Trinidad, I take it, for at least another fifty minutes. Plenty of time to get your breakfast quietly and comfortably, and pack your traps up, before you come in sight of the Port-o'-Spain lighthouse.'

After breakfast, they all hurried up on deck once more, and soon the grey peaks and rocky sierras of Trinidad began to heave in sight straight in front of them. Slowly the land grew closer and closer, till at last the port and town lay full in sight before them. Dr. Whitaker was overflowing with excitement as they reached the wharf. 'In ten minutes,' he cried to

Marian—'in ten minutes, I shall see my dear father.'

It was a strange and motley scene, ever fresh and interesting to the new-comer from Europe, that first glimpse of tropical life from the crowded deck of an ocean steamer. The *Severn* stood off, waiting for the gangways to be lowered on board, but close up to the high wooden pier of the lively, bustling little harbour. In front lay the busy wharf, all alive with a teeming swarm of black faces—men in light and ragged jackets, women in thin white muslins and scarlet turbans, children barefooted and half naked, lying sprawling idly in the very eye of the sun. Behind, white houses with green venetian blinds; waving palm-trees; tall hills; a blazing pale blue sky; a great haze of light and shimmer and glare and fervour. All round, boats full of

noisy negroes, gesticulating, shouting, swearing, laughing, and showing their big teeth every second anew in boisterous merriment. A general pervading sense of bustle and life, all meaningless and all ineffectual; much noise and little labour; a ceaseless chattering, as of monkeys in a menagerie; a purposeless running up and down on the pier and 'longshore with wonderful gesticulations; a babel of inarticulate sounds and cries and shouting and giggling. Nothing of it all clearly visible as an individual fact at first; only a confused mass of heads and faces and bandanas and dresses, out of which, as the early hubbub of arrival subsided a little, there stood forth prominently a single foremost figure—the figure of a big, heavy, oily, fat, dark mulatto, grey-haired and smooth-faced, dressed in a dirty white linen suit, and

waving his soiled silk pocket-handkerchief ostentatiously before the eyes of the assembled passengers. A supple, vulgar, oleaginous man altogether, with an astonishing air of conceited self-importance, and a profound consciousness of the admiring eyes of the whole surrounding negro populace.

'How d'ye do, captain?' he shouted aloud in a clear but thick and slightly negro voice, mouthing his words with much volubility in the true semi-articulate African fashion. 'Glad to see de *Severn* has come in puncshual to her time as usual. Good ship, de *Severn*; neber minds storms or nuffin.—Well, sah, who have you got on board? I've come down to meet de doctor and Mr. Hawtorn. Trinidad is proud to welcome back her children to her shores agin. Got 'em on board, captain?—got 'em on board, sah?'

'All right, Bobby,' the captain answered, with easy familiarity. 'Been having a pull at the mainsheet this morning?—Ah, I thought so. I thought you'd taken a cargo of rum aboard. Ah, you sly dog! You've got the look of it.'

'Massa Bobby, him doan't let de rum spile in him cellar,' a ragged fat negress standing by shouted out in a stentorian voice. 'Him know de way to keep him from spilin', so pour him down him own troat in time—eh, Massa Bobby?'

'Rum,' the oily mulatto responded cheerfully, but with great dignity, raising his fat brown hand impressively before him—'rum is de staple produck an' chief commercial commodity of de great and flourishin' island of Trinidad. To drink a moderate quantity of rum every mornin' before brekfuss is de

best way of encouragin' de principal manufacture of dis island. I do my duty in dat respeck, I flatter myself, as faithfully as any pusson in de whole of Trinidad, not exceptin' His Excellency de Governor, who ought to set de best example to de entire community. As de recognised representative of de coloured people of dis colony, I feel bound to teach dem to encourage de manufacture of rum by my own pussonal example an' earnest endeavour.' And he threw back his greasy neck playfully in a pantomimic representation of the act of drinking off a good glassful of rum-and-water.

The negroes behind laughed immoderately at this sally of the man addressed as Bobby, and cheered him on with loud vociferations. 'Evidently,' Edward said to Nora, with a face of some disgust, 'this creature is the char-

tered buffoon and chief jester to the whole of Trinidad. They all seem to recognise him and laugh at him, and I see even the captain himself knows him well of old, evidently.'

'Bless your soul, yes,' the captain said, overhearing the remark. 'Everybody in the island knows Bobby. Good-natured old man, but conceited as a peacock, and foolish too.—Everybody knows you here,' raising his voice, 'don't they, Bobby?'

The grey-haired mulatto took off his broad-brimmed Panama hat and bowed profoundly. 'I flatter myself,' he said, looking round about him complacently on the crowd of negroes, 'der isn't a better known man in de whole great an' flourishin' island of Trinidad dan Bobby Whitaker.'

Edward and Marian started suddenly, and even Nora gave a little shiver of surprise and disappointment. 'Whitaker,' Edward repeated slowly—'Whitaker—Bobby Whitaker!—You don't mean to tell us, surely, captain, that that man's our Dr. Whitaker's father!'

'Yes, I do,' the captain answered, smiling grimly. 'That's his father.—Dr. Whitaker! hi, you, sir; where have you got to? Don't you see?—there's your father.'

Edward turned at once to seek for him, full of a sudden unspoken compassion. He had not far to seek. A little way off, standing irresolutely by the gunwale, with a strange terrified look in his handsome large eyes, and a painful twitching nervously evident at the trembling corners of his full mouth, Dr.

Whitaker gazed intently and speechlessly at the fat mulatto in the white linen suit. It was clear that the old man did not yet recognise his son; but the son had recognised his father instantaneously and unhesitatingly, as he stood there playing the buffoon in broad daylight before the whole assembled ship's company. Edward looked at the poor young fellow with profound commiseration. Never in his life before had he seen shame and humiliation more legibly written on a man's very limbs and features. The unhappy young mulatto, thunderstruck by the blow, had collapsed entirely. It was too terrible for him. Coming in, fresh from his English education, full of youthful hopes and vivid enthusiasms, proud of the father he had more than half forgotten, and anxious to meet once more that ideal picture he had carried away

with him of the liberator of Trinidad—here he was met, on the very threshold of his native island, by this horrible living contradiction of all his fervent fancies and imaginings. The Robert Whitaker he had once known faded away as if by magic into absolute nonentity, and that voluble, greasy, self-satisfied, buffoonish old brown man was the only thing left that he could now possibly call 'my father.'

Edward pitied him far too earnestly to obtrude just then upon his shame and sorrow. But the poor mulatto, meeting his eyes accidentally for a single second, turned upon him such a mutely appealing look of profound anguish, that Edward moved over slowly toward the grim captain and whispered to him in a low undertone: 'Don't speak to that man Whitaker again, I beg of you.

Don't you see his poor son there's dying of shame for him?'

The captain stared back at him with the same curious half-sardonic look that Marian had more than once noticed upon his impassive features. 'Dying of shame!' he answered, smiling carelessly. 'Ho, ho, ho! that's a good one! Dying of shame is he, for poor old Bobby! Why, sooner or later, you know, he'll have to get used to him. Besides, I tell you, whether you talk to him or whether you don't, old Bobby'll go on talking about himself as long as there's anybody left anywhere about who'll stand and listen to him.—You just hark there to what he's saying now. What's he up to next, I wonder?'

'Yes, ladies and gentlemen,' the old mulatto was proceeding aloud, addressing now

in a set speech the laughing passengers on board the *Severn*, 'I'm de Honourable Robert Whitaker, commonly called Bobby Whitaker, de leadin' member of de coloured party in dis island. Along wit my lamented friend Mr. Wilberforce, an' de British Parliament, I was de chief instrument in procurin' de abolition of slavery an' de freedom of de slaves troughout de whole English possessions. Millions of my fellow-men were moanin' an' groanin' in a painful bondage. I have a heart dat cannot witstand de appeal of misery. I laboured for dem ; I toiled for dem ; I bore de brunt of de battle ; an' in de end I conquered—I conquered. Wit de aid of my friend Mr. Wilberforce, by superhuman exertions, I succeeded in passin' de grand act of slavery emancipation. You behold in me de leadin' actor in dat famous great an' im-

pressive drama. I'm an ole man now; but I have prospered in dis world, as de just always do, says de Psalmist, an' I shall be glad to see any of you whenever you choose at my own residence, an' to offer to you in confidence a glass of de excellent staple produck of dis island—I allude to de wine of de country, de admirable beverage known as rum!'

There was another peal of foolish laughter from the crowd of negroes at this one ancient threadbare joke, and a faint titter from the sillier passengers on board the *Severn*. Edward looked over appealingly at the old buffoon; but the mulatto misunderstood his look of deprecation, and bowed once more profoundly, with immense importance, straight at him, like a sovereign acknowledging the plaudits of his subjects.

'Yes,' he continued, 'I shall be happy

to see any of you—you, sah, or you—at my own estate, Whitaker Hall, in dis island, whenever you find it convenient to visit me. You have on board my son, Dr. Whitaker, de future leader of de coloured party in de Council of Trinidad; an' you have no doubt succeeded in makin' his acquaintance in de course of your voyage from de shores of England. Dr. Whitaker, of de University of Edinburgh, after pursuin' his studies——'

The poor young man gave an audible groan, and turned away, in his poignant disgrace, to the very farthest end of the vessel. It was terrible enough to have all his hopes dashed and falsified in this awful fashion; but to be humiliated and shamed by name before the staring eyes of all his fellow-passengers—that last straw was more

than his poor bursting heart could possibly endure. He walked away, broken and tottering, and leaned over the opposite side of the vessel, letting the hot tears trickle unreproved down his dusky cheeks into the ocean below.

At that very moment, before the man they called Bobby Whitaker could finish his sentence, a tall white man, of handsome and imposing presence, walked out quietly from among the knot of people behind the negroes, and laid his hand with a commanding air on the fat old mulatto's broad shoulder. Bobby Whitaker turned round suddenly and listened with attention to something that the white man whispered gently but firmly at his astonished ear. Then his lower jaw dropped in surprise, and he fell behind, abashed for a second,

into the confused background of laughing negroes. Partly from his childish recollections, but partly, too, by the aid of the photographs, Edward immediately recognised the tall white man. 'Marian, Marian!' he cried, waving his hand in welcome towards the new-comer, 'it's my father, my father!'

And even as he spoke, a pang of pain ran through him as he thought of the difference between the two first greetings. He couldn't help feeling proud in his heart of hearts of the very look and bearing of his own father—tall, erect, with his handsome, clear cut face and full white beard, the exact type of a self-respecting and respected English gentleman; and yet, the mere reflex of his own pride and satisfaction revealed to him at once the bitter

poignancy of Dr. Whitaker's unspeakable disappointment. As the two men stood there on the wharf side by side, in quiet conversation, James Hawthorn with his grave, severe, earnest expression, and Bobby Whitaker with his greasy, vulgar, negro joviality speaking out from every crease in his fat chin and every sparkle of his small pig's eyes, the contrast between them was so vast and so apparent, that it seemed to make the old mulatto's natural vulgarity and coarseness of fibre more obvious and more unmistakable than ever to all beholders.

In a minute more, a gangway was hastily lowered from the wharf on to the deck; and the first man that came down it, pushed in front of a great crowd of eager, grinning, and elbowing negroes—

mostly in search of small jobs among the passengers—was Bobby Whitaker. The moment he reached the deck, he seemed to take possession of it and of all the passengers by pure instinct, as if he were father to the whole shipload of them. The captain, the crew, and the other authorities were effaced instantly. Bobby Whitaker, with easy, greasy geniality, stood bowing and waving his hand on every side, in an access of universal graciousness towards the entire company. 'My son!' he said, looking round him inquiringly—'my son, Dr. Whitaker, of de Edinburgh University—where is he?—where is he? My dear boy! Let him come forward and embrace his fader!'

Dr. Whitaker, in spite of his humiliation, had all a mulatto's impulsive affection-

ateness. Ashamed and abashed as he was, he yet rushed forward with unaffected emotion to take his father's outstretched hand. But old Bobby had no idea of getting over this important meeting in such a simple and undemonstrative manner; for him, it was a magnificent opportunity for theatrical display, on no account to be thrown away before the faces of so many distinguished European strangers. Holding his son for a second at arm's length, in the centre of a little circle that quickly gathered around the oddly-matched pair, he surveyed the young doctor with a piercing glance from head to foot, sticking his neck a little on one side with critical severity, and then, bursting into a broad grin of oily delight, he exclaimed, in a loud stagey soliloquy: 'My son, my son, my own dear

son, Wilberforce Clarkson Whitaker! De inheritor of de tree names most intimately bound up wit de great revolution I have had de pride and de honour of effectin' for unborn millions of my African bredderin' My son, my son! We receive you wit transport! Welcome to Trinidad—welcome to Trinidad!'

'Father, father,' Dr. Whitaker whispered in a low voice, 'let us go aside a little—down into my cabin or somewhere—away from this crowd here. I am so glad, so happy to be back with you again; so delighted to be home once more, dear, dear father. But don't you see, everybody is looking at us and observing us!'

The old mulatto glanced around him with an oily glance of profound self-satisfaction. Yes, undoubtedly; he was the exact centre

of an admiring audience. It was just such a house as he loved to play to. He turned once more to his trembling son, whose sturdy knees were almost giving way feebly beneath him, and redoubled the ardour of his paternal demonstrativeness. 'My son, my son, my own dear boy!' he said once more; and then, stepping back two paces and opening his arms effusively, he ran forward quickly with short mincing steps, and pressed the astonished doctor with profound warmth to his swelling bosom. There was an expansiveness and a gushing effusion about the action which made the spectators titter audibly; and the titter cut the poor young mulatto keenly to the heart with a sense of his utter helplessness and ridiculousness in this absurd situation. He wondered to himself when the humiliating scene would ever

be finished. But the old man was not satisfied yet. Releasing his son once more from his fat grasp, he placed his two big hands akimbo on his hips, puckered up his eyebrows as if searching for some possible flaw in a horse or in a woman's figure—he was a noted connoisseur in either—and held his head pushed jauntily forward, staring once more at his son with his small pig's eyes from top to toe. At last, satisfied apparently with his close scrutiny, and prepared to acknowledge that it was all very good, he seized the young doctor quickly by the shoulders, and kissing him with a loud smack on either cheek, proceeded to slobber him piecemeal all over the face, exactly like a nine-months'-old baby. Dr. Whitaker's cheeks tingled and burned, so that even through that dusky skin, Edward, who stood a little distance off, commiserating

him, could see the hot blood rushing to his face by the deepened and darkened colour in the very centre.

Presently, old Bobby seemed to be sufficiently sated with this particular form of theatrical entertainment, and turned round pleasantly to the remainder of the company. 'My son,' he said, not without a real touch of heartfelt, paternal pride, as he glanced towards the gentlemanly looking and well-dressed young doctor, 'your fellow-passengers! Introduce me! Which is de son of my ole and valued friend, de Honourable James Hawtorn, of Wagwater?'

Dr. Whitaker, glad to divert attention from himself on any excuse, waved his hand quietly towards Edward.

'How do you do, Mr. Whitaker?' Edward said, in as low and quiet a tone as

possible, anxious as he was to disappoint the little gaping crowd of amused spectators. 'We have all derived a great deal of pleasure from your son's society on our way across. His music has been the staple entertainment of the whole voyage. We have appreciated it immensely.'

But old Bobby was not to be put off with private conversation aside in a gentle undertone. He was accustomed to living his life in public, and he wasn't going to be balked of his wonted entertainment. 'Yes, Mr. Hawtorn,' he answered in a loud voice, 'you are right, sah. De taste for music an' de taste for beauty in de ladies are two tastes dat are seldom wantin' to de sons or de grandsons of Africa, however far removed from de original negro.' (As he spoke, he glanced back with a touch of contempt and

an infinite superiority of manner at the pure-blooded blacks, who were now busily engaged in picking up portmanteaus from the deck, and squabbling with one another as to which was to carry the buckras' luggage. Your mulatto, however dark, always in a good-humoured, tolerant way, utterly despises his coal-black brethren.) 'Bote dose tastes are highly developed in my own pusson. Bote no doubt my son, Wilberforce Clarkson Whitaker, is liable to inherit from his fader's family. In de exercise of de second, I cannot fail to perceive dat dis lady beside you must be Mrs. Hawtorn. Sah'—with a sidelong leer of his fat eyes—'I congratulate you mos' sincerely on your own taste in female beauty. A very nice, fresh-lookin' young lady, Mrs. Hawtorn.'

Marian's face grew fiery red; and Edward

hardly knew whether to laugh off the awkward compliment, or to draw himself up and stroll away, as though the conversation had reached its natural ending.

'And de odder young lady,' Bobby went on, quite unconscious of the effect he had produced—'de odder young lady? Your sister, now, or Mrs. Hawtorn's?'

'This is Miss Dupuy, of Orange Grove,' Edward answered hesitatingly; for he hardly knew what remark old Bobby might next venture upon. And, indeed, as a matter of fact, the old mulatto's conversation, even in the presence of ladies, was not at all times restrained by all those artificial rules of decorum imposed on most of us by what appeared to him a ridiculously straitlaced and puritanical white conventionality.

But Edward's answer seemed to have an

extraordinary effect in sobering and toning down the old man's exuberant volubility; he pulled off his hat with a respectful bow, and said in a lower and more polite voice: 'I have de honour of knowing Miss Dupuy's fader; I am proud to make Miss Dupuy's acquaintance.'

'Here, Bobby!' the captain called out from a little forward—'you come here, say. The first-officer wants to introduce you'—with a wink at Edward—'to His Excellency the Peruvian ambassador.—Look here, Mr. Hawthorn; don't you let Bobby talk too long to your ladies, sir. He sometimes blurts out something, you know, that ladies ain't exactly accustomed to. We seafaring men are a bit rough on occasion ourselves, certainly; but we know how to behave for

all that before the women.—Bobby, don't; you'd better be careful.'

'Thank you,' Edward said, and again felt his heart smitten with a sort of remorse for poor Dr. Whitaker. That quick, sensitive, enthusiastic young man to be tied down for life to such a father! It was too terrible. In fact, it was a tragedy.

'Splendid take-down for that stuck-up, young brown doctor,' the English officer exclaimed aside in a whisper to Edward. 'Shake a little of the confounded conceit out of him, I should say. He wanted taking down a peg.—Screaming farce, isn't he, the old father?'

'I never saw a more pitiable or pitiful scene in my whole life,' Edward answered earnestly. 'Poor fellow, I'm profoundly sorry for him; he looks absolutely broken-hearted.'

The young officer gazed at him in mute astonishment. 'Can't see a joke, that fellow Hawthorn,' he thought to himself. 'Had all the fun worked out of him, I suppose, over there at Cambridge. Awful prig! Quite devoid of the sense of humour. Sorry for his poor wife; she'll have a dull life of it.—Never saw such an amusing old fool in all my days as that ridiculous, fat old nigger fellow!'

Meanwhile, James Hawthorn had been standing on the wharf, waiting for the first crush of negroes and hangers-on to work itself off, and looking for an easy opportunity to come aboard in order to meet his son and daughter. By-and-by the crush subsided, and the old man stepped on to the gangway and made his way down upon the deck.

In a moment, Edward was wringing his

hand fervently, and father and son had exchanged one single kiss of recognition in that half-shamefaced, hasty fashion in which men of our race usually get through that very un-English ceremony of greeting.

'Father, father,' Edward said, 'I am so thankful to see you once more; so anxious to see my dear mother.'

There were tears standing in both their eyes as his father answered: 'My boy, my boy! I've denied myself this pleasure for years; and now—now it's come, it's almost too much for me.'

There was a moment's pause, and then Mr. Hawthorn turned to Marian. 'My daughter,' he said, kissing her with a fatherly kiss, 'we know you, and love you already, from Edward's letters; and we'll do our best, as far as we can, to make you happy.'

There was another pause, and then the father said again: 'You didn't get my telegram, Edward?'

'Yes, father, I got it; but not till we were on the very point of starting. The steamer was actually under weigh, and we couldn't have stopped even if we had wished to. There was nothing for it but to come on as we were, in spite of it.'

'Oh, Mr. Hawthorn, there's papa!' Nora cried excitedly. 'There he is, coming down the gangway.' And as she spoke, Mr. Dupuy's portly form was seen advancing towards them with slow deliberateness.

For a second, he gazed about him curiously, looking for Nora; then, as he saw her, he walked over towards her in his leisurely, dawdling, West Indian fashion. Nora darted forward and flung her arms impul-

sively around him. 'So you've come, Nora,' the old gentleman said quietly, disembarrassing himself with elephantine gracefulness from her close embrace—'so you've come, after all, in spite of my telegram!—How was this, my dear? How was this, tell me?'

'Yes, papa,' Nora answered, a little abashed at his serene manner. 'The telegram was too late—it was thrown on board after we'd started. But we've got out all safe, you see.—And Marian—you know—Marian Ord—Mrs. Hawthorn that is now—she's taken great care of me; and, except for the hurricane, we've had such a delightful voyage!'

Mr. Dupuy drew himself up to his stateliest eminence and looked straight across at Marian Hawthorn with stiff politeness. 'I didn't know it was to Mrs. Hawthorn, I'm

sure,' he said, 'that I was to be indebted for your safe arrival here in Trinidad. It was very good of Mrs. Hawthorn, I don't doubt, to bring you out to us and act as your chaperon. I am much obliged to Mrs. Hawthorn for her kind attention and care of you on the voyage. I must thank Mrs. Hawthorn very sincerely for the trouble she may have been put to on your account.—Good-morning, Mrs. Hawthorn!—Good-morning, Mr. Hawthorn! Your son, I suppose? Ah, so I imagined.—Good-morning, good-morning.' He raised his hat with formal courtesy to Marian, and bowed slightly to the son and father. Then he drew Nora's arm carefully in his, and was just about to walk her immediately off the steamer, when Nora burst from him in the utmost amazement and rushed up to kiss Marian.

'Papa,' she cried, 'I don't think you understand. This is Marian Ord, don't you know? General Ord's daughter, that I've written to you about so often. She's my dearest friend, and now she's married to Mr. Edward Hawthorn—this is he—and Aunt Harriet gave me in charge to her to come across with; and I *must* just say good-bye to her before I leave her.—Thank you, dear, thank you both so much for all your kindness. Not, of course, that it matters about saying good-bye to you, for you and we will be such very, very near neighbours, and of course we will see a great deal of one another. —Won't we, papa? We shall be near neighbours, and see a great deal of Marian always, now she's come here to live—won't we?'

Mr. Dupuy bowed again very stiffly. 'We shall be very near neighbours, undoubtedly,

he answered with unruffled politeness; 'and I shall hope to take an early opportunity of paying my respects to—to your friend, General Ord's daughter.—I am much obliged, once more, to Mrs. Hawthorn for her well-meant attentions. Good-morning.—This way, Nora, my dear. This way to the Orange Grove carriage.'

'Father,' Edward exclaimed, in doubt and dismay, looking straight down into his father's eyes, 'what does it all mean? Explain it all to us. I'm utterly bewildered. Why did you telegraph to us not to come? And why did Nora Dupuy's father telegraph to her, too, an identical message?'

Mr. Hawthorn drew a deep breath and looked back at him with a face full of consternation and pity. 'He telegraphed to her, too, did he?' he muttered half to himself in slow

reflection. 'He telegraphed to prevent her from coming out in the *Severn*! I might have guessed as much—it's very like him.—My boy, my boy—and my dear daughter—this is a poor welcome for you, a very poor welcome! We never wanted you to come out here; and if we could, we would have prevented it. But now that you've come, you've come, and there's no helping it. We must just try to do our best to make you both tolerably comfortable.'

Marian stood in blank astonishment and silent wonder at this strange greeting. A thousand vague possibilities floated instantaneously through her mind, to be dismissed the next second, on closer consideration, as absolutely impossible. Why on earth did this handsome, dignified courtly old gentleman wish to keep them away from Trinidad?

He wasn't poor ; he wasn't uneducated ; he wasn't without honour in his own country. That he was a gentleman to the backbone, she could see and feel the moment she looked at him and heard him speak. What, then, could be his objection to his son's coming out to visit him in his own surroundings? Had he committed some extraordinary crime? Was he an ex-convict, or a fraudulent bankrupt, or a defaulting trustee? Did he fear to let his son discover his shame? But no. The bare idea was absolutely impossible. You had only to gaze once upon that fine, benevolent, clear-cut, transparently truthful face—as transparently truthful as Edward's own—to see immediately that James Hawthorn was a man of honour. It was an insoluble mystery, and Marian's heart sank within her as she wondered to herself what

this gloomy welcome foreboded for the future.

'Father,' Edward exclaimed, looking at him once more with appealing eyes, 'do explain to us what you mean? Why didn't you want us to come to Trinidad? The suspense is too terrible! We shall be expecting something worse than the reality. Tell us now. Whatever it is, we are strong enough to bear it. I know it can be nothing mean or dishonourable that you have to conceal from us! For Marian's sake, explain it, explain it!'

The old man turned his face away with a bitter gesture. 'My boy, my boy, my poor boy,' he answered slowly and remorsefully, 'I cannot tell you. I can never tell you. You will find it out for yourself soon enough. But I—I—I can never tell you!'

CHAPTER XII.

EDWARD and Marian spent their first week in Trinidad with the Hawthorns senior. Mrs. Hawthorn was kindness itself to Marian: a dear, gentle, motherly old lady, very proud of her boy—especially of his ability to read Arabic, which seemed to her a profundity of learning never yet dreamt of in the annals of humanity—and immensely pleased with her new daughter-in-law: but nothing on earth that Marian could say to her would induce her to unlock the mystery of that alarming telegram. 'No, no, my dear,' she would say, shaking her head gloomily and

wiping her spectacles, whenever Marian recurred to the subject, 'you'll find it all out only too soon. God forbid, my darling, that ever I should break it to you. I love you far too well for that. Marian, Marian, my dear daughter, you should never, never, never have come here!' And then she would burst immediately into tears. And that was all that poor frightened Marian could ever get out of her new mother-in-law.

All that first week, old Mr. Hawthorn was never tired of urging upon Edward to go back again at once to England. 'I can depart in peace now, my boy,' he said; 'I have seen you at last, and known you, and had my heart gladdened by your presence here. Indeed, if you wish it, I'd rather go back to England with you again, than that

you should stay in this unsuitable Trinidad. Why bury your talents and your learning here, when you might be rising to fame and honour over in London? What's the use of your classical knowledge out in the West Indies? What's the use of your Arabic? What's the use of your law, even? We have nothing to try here but petty cases between planter and servant: of what good to you in that will be all your work at English tenures and English land laws? You're hiding your light under a bushel. You're putting a trotting horse into a hansom cab. You're wasting your Arabic on people who don't even know the difference between Greek and Latin.'

To all which, Edward steadily replied that he wouldn't go back as long as this mystery still hung unsolved over him; and

that, as he had practically made an agreement with the Colonial Government, it would be dishonourable in him to break it for unknown and unspecified reasons. As soon as possible, he declared firmly, he would take up his abode in his own district.

House-hunting is reduced to its very simplest elements in the West Indian colonies. There is one house in each parish or county which has been inhabited from time immemorial by one functionary for the time being. The late Attorney-General dies of yellow fever, or drinks himself to death, or gets promotion, or retires to England, and another Attorney-General is duly appointed by constituted authority in his vacant place. The new man succeeds naturally to the house and furniture of his predecessor—as naturally, indeed, as he succeeds to any of his

other functions, offices, and prerogatives. Not that there is the least compulsion in the matter, only you must. As there is no other house vacant in the community, and as nobody ever thinks of building a new one—except when the old one tumbles down by efflux of time or shock of earthquake—the only thing left for one to do is to live in the place immemorially occupied by all one's predecessors in the same office. Hence it happened that at the beginning of their second week in the island of Trinidad, Marian and Edward Hawthorn found themselves ensconced with hardly any trouble in the roomy bungalow known as Mulberry Lodge, and hereditarily attached to the post of District Court Judge for the district of Westmoreland.

Marian laid herself out at once for callers,

and very soon the callers began to drop in. About the fourth day after they had settled into their new house, she was sitting in the big, bare, tropical-looking drawing-room—a great, gaunt, square barn, scantily furnished with a few tables and rocking-chairs upon the carpetless polished floor—so gaunt that even Marian's deft fingers failed to make it at first look home-like or habitable—when a light carriage drew up hastily with a dash at the front-door of the low bungalow. The young bride pulled her bows straight quickly at the heavy, old-fashioned gilt mirror, and waited anxiously to receive the expected visitors. It was her first appearance as mistress of her establishment. In a minute, Thomas, the negro butler—every man-servant is a butler in Trinidad, even if he is only a boy of twenty—ushered the new-

comers pompously into the bare drawing-room. Marian took their cards and glanced at them hastily. Two gentlemen—the Honourable Colonial Secretary, and the Honourable Director of Irrigation.

The Colonial Secretary sidled into a chair, and took up his parable at once with a very profuse and ponderous apology. 'My wife, Mrs. Hawthorn, my wife, I'm sorry to say, was most unfortunately unable to accompany me here this morning.—Charmingly you've laid out this room, really; so very different from what it used to be in poor old Macmurdo's time.—Isn't it, Colonel Daubeny?—Poor old Macmurdo died in the late yellow fever, you know, my dear madam, and Mr. Hawthorn fills his vacancy. Excellent fellow, poor old Macmurdo—ninth judge I've known killed off by yellow fever in this district since

I've been here.—My wife, I was saying, when your charming room compelled me to digress, is far from well at present—a malady of the country: this shocking climate; or else, I'm sure she'd have been delighted to have called upon you with me this morning. The loss is hers, the loss is hers, Mrs. Hawthorn. I shall certainly tell her so. Immensely sorry.'

Colonel Daubeny, the Honourable Director of Irrigation, was a far jauntier and more easy-spoken man. 'And Mrs. Daubeny, my dear madam,' he said with a fluent manner that Marian found exceedingly distasteful, 'is most unfortunately just this moment down—with toothache. Uncommon nasty thing to be down with, toothache. A perfect martyr to it. She begged me to make her excuses.—Mr. Hawthorn'—to Edward, who had just come in—'Mrs. Daubeny begged me to make

her excuses. She regrets that she can't call to-day on Mrs. Hawthorn. Beautiful view you have, upon my word, from your front piazza.'

'It's the same view, I've no doubt,' Edward answered severely, 'as it used to be in the days of my predecessor.'

'Eh! What! Ah, bless my soul! Quite so,' Colonel Daubeny answered, dropping his eye-glass from his eye in some amazement.—'Ha! Devilish good, that—devilish good, really, Mr. Hawthorn.'

Marian was a little surprised that Edward, usually so impassive, should so unmistakably snub the Colonel at first sight; and yet she felt there was something very offensive in the man's familiar manner, that made the retort perfectly justifiable, and even necessary.

They lingered a little while, talking very

ordinary tropical small-talk; and then the Colonel, with an ugly smile, took up his hat, and declared, with many unnecessary asseverations, that he must really be off this very minute. Mrs. Daubeny would so much regret having lost the precious opportunity. The Honourable Colonial Secretary rose at the same moment and added that he must be going too. Mrs. Fitzmaurice would never forgive herself for that distressing local malady which had so unfortunately deprived her of the privilege and pleasure.—Good-morning, good-morning.

But as both gentlemen jumped into the dog-cart outside, Edward could hear the Colonial Secretary, through the open door, saying to the Colonel in a highly amused voice: 'By George, he gave you as much as he got every bit, I swear, Daubeny.'

To which the Colonel responded with a short laugh: 'Yes, my dear fellow; and didn't you see, by Jove, he twigged it?'

At this they both laughed together immoderately, and drove off at once laughing, very much pleased with one another.

Before Marian and her husband had time to exchange their surprise and wonder at such odd behaviour on the part of two apparently well-bred men, another buggy drove up to the door, from which a third gentleman promptly descended. His card showed him to be the wealthy proprietor of a large and flourishing neighbouring sugar-estate.

'Called round,' he said to Edward, with a slight bow towards Marian, 'just to pay my respects to our new judge, whom I'm glad to welcome to the district of Westmoreland. A son of Mr. Hawthorn of Agualta is sure to be

popular with most of his neighbours.—Ah—hem—my wife, I'm sorry to say, Mrs. Hawthorn, is at present suffering from—extreme exhaustion, due to the heat. She hopes you'll excuse her not calling upon you. Otherwise, I'm sure, she'd have been most delighted, most delighted.—Dear me, what an exquisite prospect you have from your veranda!' The neighbouring planter stopped for perhaps ten minutes in the midst of languishing conversation, and then vanished exactly as his two predecessors had done before him.

Marian turned to her husband in blank dismay. 'O Edward, Edward!' she cried, unable to conceal her chagrin and humiliation, 'what on earth can be the meaning of it?'

'My darling,' he answered, taking her hand

in his tenderly, 'I haven't the very faintest conception.'

In the course of the afternoon, three more gentlemen called, each alone, and each of them in turn apologised profusely, in almost the very self-same words, for his wife's absence. The last was a fat old gentleman in the Customs' service, who declared with effusion many times over that Mrs. Bolitho was really prostrated by the extraordinary season. 'Most unusual weather, this, Mrs. Hawthorn. I've never known so depressing a summer in the island of Trinidad since I was a boy, ma'am.'

'So it would seem,' Edward answered dryly. 'The whole female population of the island seems to be suffering from an extraordinary complication of local disorders.'

'Bless my soul!' the fat gentleman ejaculated with a stare. 'Then you've found out that, have you?—Excuse me, excuse me. I—didn't know—— Hm, I hardly expected that you expected—or rather, that Mrs. Hawthorn expected—— Ah, quite so.—Good-morning, good-morning.'

Marian flung herself in a passion of tears upon the drawing-room sofa. 'If anyone else calls this afternoon, Thomas,' she said, 'I'm not at home. I won't see them—I can't see them; I'll endure it no longer.—O Edward, darling, for God's sake, tell me, why on earth are they treating us as if—as if I were some sort of moral leper? They won't call upon me. What can be the reason of it?'

Edward Hawthorn held his head between

his hands and walked rapidly up and down the bare drawing-room. 'I can't make it out,' he cried; 'I can't understand it. Marian—dearest—it is too terrible!'

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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